

What Would Jesus Pray - The Gethsemane Prayer

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[0 : 0 0] one of the pastors here at the church and if you knew you've come in at the third of three a three-week series we're doing on the prayers of Jesus so first week we looked at the Lord's Prayer and we saw that it's a model for us for our prayers that we shouldn't necessarily pray the very words of the Lord's Prayer over and over again but that we should base our prayers on that prayer we also saw last week in John 17 Jesus prayer for his disciples we saw four things that Jesus wants for our church for characteristics that should be present in our church according to the prayer that he prayed for us and this week we come to the most gut-wrenching heart-wrenching heartbreaking prayer of Jesus Jesus prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night that he's betrayed the night before he's killed murdered on a cross and we see in this prayer Jesus absolutely stressed out to the point as he says to the point of death we see that he comes before his father in this time and spends time with the father in prayer so we're going to see tonight one recurring theme that is when we come to our times of trial our times of grief and testing and sacrifice and suffering we need to do as Jesus did and follow the example that he gave us come before our father in prayer spend time with the father in prayer so what with that in mind why don't I pray for us I'll pray to the father for us that he would help us as we look at this gut-wrenching prayer father you have inspired this bible that we have in front of us and we're so grateful that you've given it to us we're so thankful that you have inspired it in such an honest way the most honest book in the world we thank you Jesus that you so honestly opened yourself to show us how you responded to this gut-wrenching time please help us to learn from it in Jesus name amen so just to give you a bit of context uh at this point in the in the narrative in Matthew's narrative uh it's come to the time of Passover and uh Passover is really important in the history of Israel I'll give you a little recap about Passover Passover harkens back and and is celebrated each year to remind the Israelites of how God took them out of bondage in Israel in the exodus you might have heard the

Israel Israel story in the exodus you might have seen the prince of Egypt which is kind of a little bit like the bible's account of account of what happened in Egypt and so each year the Israelites would celebrate with this feast thanking God for the exodus for springing them out of suffering and uh bondage to the Egyptians but also they would particularly thank God for uh what he did in sparing them from the 10th plague that he sent on Egypt so at the time you might remember the Israelites are in Egypt they're in bondage they're slaves and God wants them to be released so that they can praise him and worship him in the wilderness and eventually come to the promised land and so he sends Moses Moses Moses says to Pharaoh you've got to let these people go God wants it to happen you've got to do it he's serious Pharaoh's heart is hardened and God sends a bunch of plagues 10 plagues to try and get Pharaoh to change his mind and let these people go and the 10th plague is the most horrendous plague really because God sends the plague that takes the firstborn child of every household in Egypt everyone who's unrepentant who hadn't seen God's works in the plagues and repented and followed the

God of the bible every one of those people they were going to have their firstborn child taken from them killed by the angel of destruction and so what he says to the Israelites is you guys who love me and obey my word in repentance and faith I want you to accept grace from me by taking a lamb I want you to use this lamb year old lamb without blemish I want you to use it as a sacrifice as a substitutionary sacrifice so I want you to take it I want you to kill it I want you to take the blood from that lamb and paint it on your doorposts when the angel of destruction comes into Egypt when it comes to a house with the blood painted on the doorpost it's going to recognize that as a substitutionary sacrifice it's going to pass over that house and go to the houses of the unrepentant Egyptians and take the firstborn so that's why it's called Passover because the angel of destruction the angel of death or the 10th plague passed over the houses of those who had this sacrifice this

blood to protect them so fast forward to Jesus time and they're celebrating this Passover meal this really important celebration of what God did for them in Egypt and Jesus explains a couple of things he explains that he's going to be betrayed by one of the disciples and he explains that he's going to be a sacrifice for the sins of the world firstly he explains that there's going to be a betrayal someone's going to betray him and he says it's going to be Judas Judas was one of the disciples I guess he hung out with Jesus for three years anyway and he kind of looked like he loved Jesus kind of looked like he knew Jesus but John tells us that the whole time over those three years he was stealing money from the treasury that was going to be used for the relief of the poor and the Bible tells us that he betrayed Jesus for the amount of 30 pieces of silver Zechariah 11 12 to 13 prophesies that exact amount that Jesus would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver and Judas fulfills that prophecy and betrays Jesus a lot of you might have friends like this they look like Christians they look like they love Jesus they've been close to the Lord it seems and yet at the first sign of trouble first sign of temptation they ditch him they dump him they'll take comfort over pain they'll take worldliness over discipleship they reject Jesus just like Judas did that's Judas and Jesus points him out as the man who will betray him he also talks a little bit about the sacrifice he's going to make on the cross the next day so he says just a little bit before you can check this out in the Bibles verse 26 to 28 you would hear this every month here if you come for communion Jesus says some really important words and Matthew tells us while they are eating this Passover meal Jesus took a loaf of bread and after blessing it he broke it and gave it to the disciples and said take it this is my body then he took the cup and after giving thanks he gave it to them saying drink from it all of you for this is the blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins Passover meal Last Supper Jesus identifies himself as the sacrifice for the sins of the world in Egypt and throughout Old Testament history they had sacrifices animals blood had to be shed to forgive sins to stop God's wrath from coming upon people God's wrath was coming against the Egyptians and those who wouldn't paint the blood on their doorposts God's wrath today is coming against those who don't repent don't put their faith in Jesus and what Jesus is saying I am going to be that sacrifice we're not going to have to sacrifice lambs anymore you're not going to have to paint anything on your doorposts I, my blood is going to be for the sins of the whole world 1 Corinthians 5.7 calls Jesus the Passover lamb identifies him as the great fulfillment the great Passover lamb and John the Baptist says in John 1.29 here, speaking of Jesus here is the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world

[8 : 38] Jesus is going to present himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world and so he comes to this passage we come to the garden Jesus is in the garden having just eaten this meal with his disciples and he goes to the garden with them and he arrives there knowing that he's going to be betrayed by a so-called friend knowing that his disciples are going to desert him he tells them that just prior to this knowing that he's going to be arrested and falsely accused that he's going to be crucified and killed in the most devastating way and he knows that as the lamb of God as the ultimate sacrifice he is going to have the wrath of God God's righteous white hot anger at sin is going to be poured out upon him on the cross that's how he's coming to the garden let's pick up the story verse 36 let's start there then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane and he said to his disciples sit here while I go over there and pray so Jesus has come to this garden it's a garden it's a garden within an olive grove on the Mount of Olives and he's come there to pray he knows what's about to happen he needs time with his father he needs to prepare himself he needs to rest with God a little bit about what's going to happen and so he comes to the garden to pray and I think there's a little bit of a parallel here between Jesus in the garden and Adam who is in the garden in Genesis chapter 1 to 3 remember Adam is in the garden he is given an opportunity to sin to disregard God to go his own way to choose his way over God's way and he fails and since then everything is broken that's why Jesus is here in the garden where Adam fails

Jesus prevails though because we see that Jesus unlike Adam chooses to obey the will of his father and this is going to be the big idea for the sermon Jesus chooses God's will over his own will the Bible calls Jesus the last Adam where the first Adam failed the last Adam prevails and that's how we can have forgiveness of our sins forgiveness of the sins that started in that first garden in Eden so Jesus prays and I think this is a really good example for us Jesus is our example how we should live as Christians and we see him coming to the garden the depths of despair just freaking out stressed out and he says to his disciples you stay here I'm going to go and I'm going to pray his choice in the midst of despair and discouragement is to pray that should be our example too verse

37 to 39 he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee these were three of his closest friends so it's Peter

James and John they're there with him at the big events in his life like the transfiguration and the big ticket events of his ministry they're there with him they're like his inner circle they're his prayer triplet plus one they're his inner circle of friends he has his disciples and then he has his inner circle of leaders I think he wants to be with them remember he's gone to the garden with all his disciples he's left all of them but three and he wants those three to be with him to stay up with him and to pray with him I think this is a good example for us too that in our times of distress and depression and despair we need to have a couple of good brothers and sisters that we can depend on to pray with us to comfort us to encourage us and I'm just thinking now about next year how we can establish a network of prayer triplets or accountability partners or something like that so that we know each one of you guys and me when we come to these times of despair we have that inner circle of friends that we can depend on we don't want anyone at this church to come to a time they feel they're not being ministered to and cared for pastorally so we'll think more about that I think it's a good example for us so he took with him Peter and two sons of Zebedee and began to be grieved and agitated then he said to them I am deeply grieved even to death remain here stay awake with me and going a little farther he threw himself on the ground and prayed this is what he prayed my father if it is possible let this cup pass from me yet not what I want but what you want this point Jesus is grieved he's agitated he's stressed to the point of death he says and Luke tells us Luke was a physician a doctor in his gospel I think it's Luke 22 44 he says Jesus began to sweat blood he was that stressed out

I've got a little bit of research done here about this phenomenon it's true people can really have this happen to them in deep stress I've got a little note here it says Luke is the only gospel writer to mention the bloody sweat probably because of his interest as a physician in this rare psychological phenomenon although this medical condition is relatively rare according to Dr.

[14:45] Friedrich Zugeby it is well known the clinical term is hemato-hydrosis he says around the sweat glands there are multiple blood vessels in a net like form under the pressure of great stress incredible stress the vessels constrict then as the anxiety starts to pass the blood vessels dilate to the point of rupture the blood goes into the sweat glands and as the sweat glands are producing a lot of sweat it pushes the blood to the surface coming out as droplets of blood mixed with sweat very rare condition under the most trying testing circumstances will someone sweat blood this is what's happening to Jesus in this time he is freaking out I don't mean to say that he's losing his mind I mean to say he is really stressed so why is this why is he this stressed he knows this has been coming all throughout the book of John he's saying my hour's not yet come my hour's not yet come now my hour's come he knows the way he's going to die he knows why he has to die he knows what's going to happen so why is he so stressed number one he knows what kind of death he's going to die

Roman crucifixion was the most terrible way to die little bit I did a little bit more research on hemato-hydrosis and it turns out that when you're in that kind of situation where you sweat blood your skin also becomes highly highly sensitive highly sensitive and so if you've ever seen the passion of the Christ or read the Bible even you'll see that Jesus gets beaten he gets flogged to within an inch of his life and that's going to hurt but on top of that he's already highly sensitive due to this high level of stress he knows it's going to hurt it's going to hurt for a long time that when he's nailed to the cross it's going to take a long time for him to die by asphyxiation that would stress me out if I'm here tonight preaching to you and I know in the morning I'm going to be nailed to a cross I'd be pretty stressed that's not the main reason though why he's stressed out in fact that's probably a very small part of it

I think the main reason he's stressed out is because he knows why he's going to the cross the wrath of God is burning against people who sin has been from Adam onward this isn't kind of a you know your dad's angry and you get a few whacks kind of anger this is burning white hot righteous anger at sin Jesus knows that when he dies on the cross he's going to be a substitute for our sin he's going to be taking that wrath upon himself so that we won't have to endure it for eternity when he dies he knows that he's going to be subjected to that kind of wrath remember the son has been in perfect loving community with the father and the holy spirit for eternity past he knows that when he dies he takes that wrath upon himself that relationship is going to be broken for a time 2 Corinthians 5 verse 21 says

God made him Jesus who knew no sin to be sin for us he was perfect he was he took upon himself all of our sin Romans 3 21 to 26 says that God put forward Jesus as a sacrifice of atonement or a propitiation by his blood that means that when he bled on the cross the wrath of God instead of coming upon us when we die and subjecting us to eternal punishment in hell he deflected that away from God and onto himself that's what propitiation is and this is stressing him out if you knew that you were about to be subjected to the undiluted wrath of a righteous God you'd be a little stressed and Jesus certainly is stressed and he says if this cup can pass from me there's been a debate about the cup but I think

Old Testament context tells us that that cup is the wrath of God Jesus knows he has to drink that cup and what he prays is amazing he knows all of this he knows what's going to happen and he says quite honestly Father if it is possible let this cup pass from me yet not what I want but what you want he echoes the Lord's prayer here doesn't he remember how he told us to pray our Father in heaven part of the prayer is your will be done quite often to pray that prayer your will be done will mean serious cost to us and sacrifice and here it's the ultimate example Jesus says I don't want to do it

[20 : 29] I don't want to be subjected to this kind of wrath I don't want to be separated from your Father if there's any way we can do away with this if there's any way that you can just forget about the wrath against sin if there's any way that we can sort of get around this that would be what I want I would prefer that but not what I want what you want your will be done this is the example for us in our prayers I used to think it was a cop out when people prayed for sick people and said Lord we just want your will to be done I thought no you should be praying God heal this person now you need to do this now you need to heal them do it but we learned in the first week that Christian prayer is not like pagan prayer pagan prayer is about manipulating the gods to do what you want them to do so the gods are really capricious and petulant you don't know what they're going to do so you need to try and convince them that your case is the best case you manipulate them through repeating over and over again imprecations words this god

I want you to bless the harvest bang bang Jesus says don't pray like that why because you've got a father in heaven he's good and he's powerful and he's got a plan there's two sides to the way we should pray Jesus does pray if there's another way let's do that but he punctuates his prayers with your will be done we can pray for a sick people sick people and say god please heal them we need to punctuate our prayers with this your will be done prayer prayer is not about us changing god it's about god changing us i think we fall into two errors here when we talk about prayer during suffering and that's what we're talking about tonight when you're suffering when you're in pain when something is going dreadfully wrong we can either think god is sovereign he can do whatever he wants but he's not helping me so he doesn't love me what's the point of praying we saw that this morning paul preached on a great passage where jesus raises lazarus from the dead and people come to jesus and say your buddy your buddy lazarus he's he's really sick and jesus who's on the other side of the river a few miles away he didn't come straight to lazarus and heal him or he could have commanded from the other side of the river lazarus be healed and he would be healed he didn't do it he waited a couple of days he turned up lazarus had been dead for four days and you could look at that situation and think jesus doesn't love lazarus he could have saved him why didn't he do anything but as paul showed us this morning actually jesus showed his love for lazarus and mary and martha by delaying him by raising him for the dead so that they would see that he's the son of god so that they would worship him so that they would understand more of who god is and what he's like we have to see this we can't see god's plan for us we can't see god's will we're too finite god's will is like a what are they called big patchwork quilt or a cross stitch thing as far as i know from the other side the reverse side of these things it's just a mess of cotton and fabric and stuff just a mess of wool and it's going crazy can't make out a single detail that's what we see honestly in the events of our life particularly those events of suffering and chaos seeming chaos but god sees the front side god sees the picture he sees the detail he sees the plan and so when we come to these issues these seasons of suffering we can't say god this is chaos you don't know what's going on what are you doing because we don't see the whole picture so like jesus we've got to pray in faith saying god i want this pain to go away but your will be done see god is a father we've seen this every week jesus prays to a father he's a perfect father he's not like your dad who might have been an idiot he is a perfect father and like a perfect father he is strong and sovereign and able to save you and rescue you and guide you and like a perfect father he loves you and cares for

you and comforts you and saves you we need to trust that that's what god has in mind in every area of our life let's look at verse 40 to 41 then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping and he said to peter so you could not stay awake with me one hour how long has he been praying an hour desperate blood drenched prayer for an hour wrestling with god so you could not stay awake with me one hour stay awake and pray that you might not come into the time of trial the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak now before we judge these guys how about we identify with them the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak i think jesus is saying i know you guys want to be with me i know you guys care for me you want to pray with me but you're undisciplined you're weak i can really identify with these guys i know that i should be praying that i should be reading the word that i should be worshipping god throughout the day but so often my flesh is weak illustration is renee and i have family worship together and i love it love reading the bible with her and praying with her and singing songs with her and it's great but quite often it'll get to the end of the day and we haven't made time for it and you know it's late and we start renee starts reading the bible and i'll fall asleep or i start praying for her and i will literally fall asleep as i pray for her and then kind of wake up and pretend that i hadn't been asleep but i know and she knows and god knows that i've been asleep see the spirit is willing i love doing it i want to spend that time with her and with god the flesh so often is weak and it's an issue of discipline the generations before us have been a lot better at this than we have we are so undisciplined in this area so identify with these guys admit your sin and start tightening up your discipline in spending time with god i was speaking to someone from this congregation yesterday who was talking about this issue and and you know what it's not always that you're doing something evil instead of doing something good it's not like you're downloading pornography or gossiping instead of reading your bible and praying it's quite often that you're doing something good but you're not doing the most important thing so this guy was telling me you know he had these gifts in this area and he said he really wanted to use them for god's glory and he was so intent that he would use this gift and this gift that he had for god's glory that started impinging on his prayer life and his bible reading time that's quite often the case godly things get in the way of the most godly things the most important things bible reading and prayer god speaks to us in his word we speak to god in prayer it's so important verse 42 to 44 again he went away for a second time and prayed my father if this cannot pass unless i drink it your will be done again he came and found them sleeping for their eyes were heavy so leaving them again he went away and prayed for a third time saying the same words why does he go back three times i think it's it's just that he needs to continue in prayer because of the enormity of his stress and the enormity of the situation before him he said in the first week that

prayers can be long prayers can be short prayers can be spontaneous they can be planned they can be private they can be public god loves all genuine prayer they can be eloquent they can be simple god loves prayer but in the times of real suffering and trials when you get that diagnosis and it's cancer when the when your wife has a miscarriage when your spouse cheats on you or your parents leave you you need to spend some good amount of time in prayer and you might need to pray over and over and that's the way that god comforts us that's the way that god molds us it's the way that god makes his will our will jesus spends three separate occasions in prayer lengthy prayer he says if this cannot pass if this is the only way we can do it if this wrath that's coming against the sins of the world this wrath that's going to take everyone to hell forever if that cannot be dealt with any other way your will be done jesus has a very real choice in front of him don't be mistaken he's not dragged there by anyone he could have leveled jerusalem with a click of his fingers the soldiers don't have any real power over him when they come and arrest him jesus has a choice he can choose to go back to heaven relationship with god perfection just as it was before he came to earth in the incarnation he can spend time with god we can be subjected to eternal punishment that is an option he doesn't have to go through all of this or he can embrace pain he can embrace separation from god he can embrace wrath and condemnation so that you if you believe in jesus if you put your trust in him so that you can be saved spared from that anger forever he's got a real choice here and he says he chooses to save us he's not under no obligation to do that is he he owes us nothing we don't deserve anything from him but he chooses that so grateful that he did here's the big idea guys when it comes to our prayer life right now when you're in this time of suffering that you're in if you're experiencing suffering or tomorrow when you start to experience that real intense suffering or in 10 years and it will happen by the way no one escapes from this in this life in this sinful life everyone's going to lose a loved one close to them sometimes in the most tragic and sudden circumstances many of you are going to experience the heartache of miscarriage i know many of you have many

of you are going to have friends who like judas fall away from faith or reject jesus you're going to have brothers and sisters and children who choose death instead of life who choose wrath instead of forgiveness these are the big serious issues of suffering that come into our lives and when they come when you're in jesus shoes in a way though no one will ever be in that intense situation as intense as he was in most intense suffering that anyone's ever experienced but when you come into those times of testing and suffering and trial how are you going to respond you need to figure this out now before you get there because otherwise you'll just despair you need to have in your mind your response to god when you're coming to suffering when the doctor looks at you in the eye and says it is cancer and you're not going to make it you got six months like our friend ben had after he's 22 and he got diagnosed six months later he's dead when you get that prognosis what are you going to do jesus gives us the example what you need to do is say father i don't want cancer it's going to hurt i don't want chemotherapy i don't want to lose my hair i don't want to sit in a hospital bed for months i want the pain i don't want to be emaciated i don't want to lose my faculties i don't want to die i don't want it please take it away from me and you need to punctuate the prayer with your will be done and it's not a religious flippant kind of tack on the end superstitious your will be done it is a serious god i i know that you're a father who loves me and who is powerful your will be done when your spouse or your girlfriend boyfriend comes to you and says i've cheated on you i'm with someone else now what are you going to do are you going to throw away faith are you going to despair are you going to hit the bottle are you going to forget about church bible prayer or are you going to say god this sucks but i know that you're a loving father your will be done same with the miscarriage same with the death of a loved one you need to be in a position where you can wrestle with god and be honest he wants you to be honest but you need to be in a position where you can say like jesus did and a far greater suffering than you'll ever experience your will be done not what i want but what you want that's the way you pray if you believe that god is a father who loves you and who is mighty to save you and who has a plan for you that is for your good i think we'll leave it there i want to pray for us that we would pray like jesus prayed in the garden of gethsemane when we come to a time of suffering so let's pray together and ask god for help father thanks again for the example of jesus that he provides for us the perfect example for how we should live how we should live our christian life how we should relate to others how we should love others how we should love you as our father thank you for this honest raw intense insight into his the night before he was betrayed his last night on earth father enable us when we come to those times of suffering those times of testing and trial to those times of devastation and depression and despair lord when we come to those times please give us strength to pray like jesus prayed father please remove this suffering from me but above all your will be done we thank you for being a good dad a loving dad a powerful dad a dad who

[37 : 47] has plans for us that everything that happens to us would work together for our good because we love you and we've been called according to your purpose prayers in you