

Prayerful Preparation for Testing

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- [0 : 0 0] Luke chapter number 22. As you're turning back there, I'm going to ask the guys in the back that have the portion of Scripture from Hebrews to hand it to you. I know that you have Hebrews in the same Bible that you have the book of Luke.
- But I want to give you a handout today of just a portion of Scripture from Hebrews. Because I want you to follow along with that portion of Hebrews as we look at Luke chapter number 22. I want to encourage you to place it somewhere prominent in your office or at home.
- And to look at this portion of Scripture today because the Word of God gives us a commentary upon this portion that we're going to look at. As they do that, how many of you have answered this question this week?
- What time is it? All right. How many of you have answered that? If you have small kids in here, you probably have answered it more than once or twice this week. It's wild that these little humans who don't have any kind of watch or have any kind of schedule are constantly wanting to know what time is it.
- All right. Sale always wants to know what time it is. Carson doesn't usually know what day it is. All right. Tinsley wants to know what decade me and Stephanie are from. She's certain it isn't anyone that's recent.
- [1 : 0 7] And then Thatcher probably thinks time is some kind of construct and we shouldn't pay attention to it. All right. Or something abstract that I don't even understand. But our kids talk about what time it is and it's important.
- In the book of Luke here, this is the shortest description of this part of the story as opposed to Matthew and Mark and John and explaining it. And this portion here in Luke, even though it's a smaller set of verses for this part of the narrative, part of the story, there's a few details that aren't included in other portions of the Bible.
- And one of them has to do with time in verse number 53. It's the last verse that I read for you earlier, but it says, But this is your hour and the power of darkness.
- That's why I want you to have the portion of Hebrews ready available to you to look at often. So we're having an eyewitness description of what's happening with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, where they're on the mount as he is praying there.
- And we see this, and it's being described to us from an eyewitness that told the story to Luke. But there's also another perspective, a heavenly perspective of what's going on that's so very important to us.
- [2 : 1 7] If you've been with us for all 90-so sermons in the book of Luke, you'll see that prayer bring others. At every transition in ministry, at every key moment, we see an emphasis on prayer.
- Jesus is going to start his earthly ministry in Luke 3, 21, and it says that he baptized, and we find him praying. When there's a confrontation with the religious establishment, we're going to see that he withdrew himself from the wilderness.
- Before calling of his disciples in Luke chapter number 6, it says he goes up into a mountain to pray. When he begins to speak about his death that is coming, he says once again he went up into a mountain to pray.

And in Luke 11, it says he went to a certain place, and it's very likely in this Mount of Olives would have been that same certain place that the disciples would have asked him, would you teach us to pray?

If you and I are scared of going to a place that we may find trouble, we would avoid it. But Jesus goes to that place, to that certain place, and he prays.

[3 : 17] Judas knows that he goes there often. That had become part of his tradition as it's already been read to us. It was very common for Jesus and the disciples to retreat to this place and to spend time in prayer.

Jesus went there knowing that Judas would know that he was able to find him there, and he went there to prepare. And so this is a significant moment, not just for the disciples of that day, but for the disciples, you and I.

See, Jesus didn't go just to the garden to teach us as an example of how to pray, but he went there so we would be able to pray. If he did not go there, if he did not take of this cup, if he did not go to the cross, then we would have no access to the Father.

We do it so oftentimes, almost flippantly, the idea that we can enter into the presence of God. No knocking, no waiting in a waiting room, but just boldly we go into his presence.

And we're able to do that because of the death of our Savior and our place. So before we get to Luke, I want to take a quick trip to Hebrews, chapter number 5, verse 7 through 10.

[4 : 22] Follow along in your Bible or with the handout. As I said, we have an eyewitness account, but we also have an eternal heavenly perspective as we have commentary on this passage in the book of Hebrews.

It says in verse number 7, Who in the days of his flesh, and that's what Jesus is in at this time in Luke 22, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared, though he were a son, yet learned the obedience by the things which he suffered, and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him, called of God the high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

That portion of Scripture, just three verses, it would cause you to ask many questions if you were sitting down to study that. What would cause Jesus to fear? Was his prayer answered in Luke 22?

What does it mean that Jesus learned obedience? How could Jesus be made perfect? Those are all very good questions that you would ask of the Scripture as you would read Hebrews, and you could find answers to these here in Luke chapter number 22.

So as we look through this story, you're going to have a better understanding of it, and I pray not just an academic understanding, but one that really just gets down into your heart when you realize what is happening here as Jesus in the days leading up to the cross.

[5 : 42] That first portion there said, who were in the days of his flesh. Reminds you that Jesus is a living among us. It implies that he existed eternally before he ever came to the earth, before he was ever born in a manger.

Our God is co-eternal, co-existent. But in the days of the flesh here, he came, and it says, as he was wont in verse number 39, which is just the way of saying as is tradition.

David explained that for you. He had a pattern of his life. He had a way in which he lived his life. It was common. There were paths that he walked, not just once, but many times.

When he went to the temple as a teenager, when he went to the temple and he was before them, they saw him. And at the end, when Judas comes up to him and he says, you've seen me daily in the temple and you didn't cause any problem.

What is right now? What is it that you are doing? So Jesus was seen among us. And it's extremely important that you understand that Jesus is the son of God and the son of man, which was sung about.

[6 : 49] As the son of man, he was able to be standing there as Judas walks up to him and betrays him by kissing him on the cheek. It was just marking him.

They wanted to know where Jesus would be found. And Judas walks up and he kisses Jesus on the cheek. And then from there, he will go to the cross. He couldn't do that if he did not come and become fully man.

So the way it says in Hebrews, it says it like this. It says, when in the days of flesh. And so I want you to make sure you understand that, what we're seeing in Luke chapter number 22. And it's in the flesh that he will endure the cross.

In Hebrews chapter 12, verse 2, it says that Jesus, he looks to the cross with a joy that is set before him, but he will endure the cross, despising the shame.

He will despise the shame that will be laid upon him. And as the son of man, he will call upon divine assistance to endure the cross and the shame. And that's what he's demonstrating for us.

[7 : 49] It is a complete dependence upon the father to come through this time of testing and temptation. And that's what's happening. And he calls upon the other disciples. He is praying.

It says a stone's cast away, not very far. They should have been able to see him. They should have been able to hear him crying out. And he provided an example. But you know this. Jesus is more than a mere example.

The gospel is not be like Jesus and do what Jesus does. Because we would all be completely hopeless. We cannot be like Jesus. And through the Old Testament and the giving of the Ten Commandments and through your own experience, we all know that we're somebody that is broken.

That we're all somebody who does not meet the standard, that does not meet the mark. And so he's more than an example. When God, he's calling upon the disciples to watch and pray because he knows that there's a time of testing that is coming.

There's a time of temptation. And so the disciples were not prepared as they thought they were. Peter said last week that he was his ride-or-die friend, right? He says, if you're going to live, I'll be with you.

[8 : 57] If you're going to die, I'm going to be with you. You can count on me. But when the testing came and when the temptation came, we see that that wasn't the case. But Jesus said, when you fail, I want you to go and encourage the other people that also are going to scatter.

So Jesus did not ask his disciples to pray for him as though he might succumb to the temptation, but he tells them that they need to prepare and they need to, in the same manner, they need to prepare themselves through prayer.

And then verse number seven of Hebrews five, it says, in the days of flesh, when he had been offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto them, they were able to save him from death.

It speaks of that agonizing prayer from Luke chapter number 22. It says, in Luke, we find that he kneels down and prays.

And then in Matthew, it says that his soul was exceeding sorrowful. You may know the expression that it's the darkest before the dawn. And that's what we're looking at here in regards to the resurrection.

[10 : 00] Before next Sunday, we see the resurrection. We are looking at the darkest hour of human history, that it doesn't start with the whip. The pain and agony that Jesus fills comes before any of the physical harm.

It happens here in the garden. On a Thursday night, we read of the story, this Thursday night, we'll read of the story of the crucifixion. And we say excruciating, which means pain that comes from the cross.

But today we look at the sorrow for sin that brings us, that is received from Christ as he will take on our sin. In many ways, the most intense suffering doesn't happen at Golgotha, but it happens here in the garden.

And Jesus demonstrates that our physical posture can represent that of our heart. It would have been tradition or custom for them to pray for the, as to raise their hands towards heaven and to look up.

We see this happening. Jesus does it in John chapter number 17, but this is what would have been most common that they would have seen in the temple is praying like this. But here in this story, we find that Jesus, the son of God, he kneels down on his knees and he cries out in agony.

[11 : 10] And so the posture of his heart is demonstrated where he's at physically. We have enough teaching in the Bible, through the Bible, Ezra, Solomon, here in Jesus.

We find it in Paul, we find that there's times that we should pray like this as well, that we should get on our knees and the posture of our heart should be demonstrated in us, laying out before the Lord and crying out to him.

We also have enough examples in the Bible where they don't pray like that, where they pray just the standing. And so we see that there comes times where we would need, the posture of our body should reflect the posture of our heart.

And I would like to encourage you. I know this is what I normally do at the end of the service, but I want to stop right here in the middle and to give you just a challenge or some application in this week. If you had a handout, if you didn't, you can get one at the Next Steps table.

But I'd like to encourage you this week to spend 15 minutes a day on your knees praying to God as you prepare your heart, as we will come together next week and celebrate the resurrection.

[12 : 14] If the Son of God is not too good to get, if he believes that getting on his knees would be appropriate for him, then why would we ever believe that it's beyond us to do that?

And so he provides that example when he cries out and we see this. And I want to make sure you understand what it is in the pain that he feels. What is this? Is it a fear of pain and of death?

Some that criticize Jesus would say that there's other people that went to their death more bravely or boldly than Jesus did. I read a story this week of a man that was killed by Napoleon.

And when he was killed, he said he wanted to give the command for them to shoot. And he told them, he said, aim for my heart and don't mess up my face. That was his last thing to say. Quite vain, I guess.

But he said, just shoot me here in the heart. And so he went to it and he seemed to be more brave. And so is this our Savior? Is he afraid of the physical pain? Is that what he's crying out for?

[13 : 09] And I want you to know there's something much more heavy that is happening here. The agony comes because Jesus is going to bear the wrath of God through taking the punishment that we deserve.

See, Jesus has a holy fear or has a holy reverence. In Hebrews 5, 7, it says it, strong crying in tears unto him that was able to save him from death and was hurt in that he feared.

He had a reverence to the fact that he was sinless, but now he is going to be the sinless Savior is going to be counted among the transgressors that all of your sins, that all the sins, all the way back from Adam and Eve to the sins that we this week had in our own life that they were all going to be put upon him.

And so there's a reverence to that, not desiring the separation that sin would bring. Sin brings a separation. It brings a death and he will take that. And so he has a sanctified emotion.

We don't understand because when we have fear, it's often rooted in disbelief, but that's not the case. As when we have anger, it's often not rooted in what is right, but we see that Jesus is angry, but he sins not.

[14 : 20] And we see that he has a fear and a reverence here that isn't rooted in disbelief, but it's in the fact that there's a reverence to him who is sinless, taking on the sins of the whole world.

And so his prayer in verse number 42 was that if you would remove this cup from me. So I brought this cup here with me today. We had seen the cup that was being passed last week in the Passover that they took it.

I don't know if I shared with you, but I was my first time to take the Lord's table on the mission field was in the Republic of Georgia. There was about 300 people there and we took it all from one cup, all right?

If you're going to take the Lord's Supper from one cup, you want to be at the front of the line, all right? And not at the back of the line. And so this cup that was being passed around to them and they took it and it was passed to them and they would drink.

Now given the same symbolism, there's a cup that is being passed to our Savior and he's going to have it. And this cup here, it symbolizes for us the sin of all of mankind.

[15 : 26] And so this is not a prayer that discerned the will of God, but it's a prayer that do the will of God. And so what is that cup? You and I might struggle to not understand, but that original audience would be very much aware of what it was he was speaking about.

In Isaiah 51, 17, it says, Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which is drunk at the hand of the Lord, the cup of his fury. Thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling and wrung them out, that Jesus is going to take on himself all the sins of mankind.

So this is an intensely human prayer. Godly men do not want to be separated from God. When James and John, they said, we want to sit at your right hand, Jesus said, will you be able to drink of the cup that I will be able to drink of?

He is speaking of this cup. They would not be able to do that. As you know, I often like to read to see what Charles Spurgeon will say about a passage. And this is what he says about the cup. He says, I am never afraid of exaggeration.

When I speak of what my Lord endured, all hell was distilled in that cup of which our God and Savior, Jesus Christ, was made to drink. That it was all distilled into that cup.

[16 : 38] This vile and filthy and it was horrible and that would cause Jesus to come to it with agony. And so it's not the physical death by the crucifixion or by Satan.

Jesus had already shown his power over death and raising people. He had met Satan in the wilderness and conquered him, but it was the wrath of God and our sin that he would take on himself for our salvation.

And this cup symbolizes every sin that has been committed. 2 Corinthians 5, 21, For he made him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

And that is what is happening. He is headed to the cross. He is being made sin for you and I. And so you may not understand what sin is. You may take it lightly, but Jesus Christ knew what sin was and Jesus knew that he drank the cup.

He would be numbered with the transgressors. So not only does it represent the sin, but it represents the punishment for our sins. It says that the father spared not his own son in Romans chapter number 8.

[17 : 41] And so later in this 24-hour period, Jesus is going to cry out and he's going to say those words, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

He will experience the pain and separation that sin brings. And this is what is brought about, his agony. And this is what brought Jesus to his knees and he demonstrates his dependence on God.

And you and I should be very thankful that he drank the cup. And he said, Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done. That desire was greater. Once in the garden, a sinless man battled Satan and sin, self, and temptation in that garden and he lost.

And he said, My will be done. And this impacted every one of us. Now, the second Adam, the sinless Christ has come and he says, Not my will, but your will be done.

And now he has redeemed people from every tribe and tongue. And though he was a son, it says in Hebrews, he learned obedience of the things in which he suffered. This doesn't mean that he moved, as you and I would, from disobedience to obedience, but he moved from obeying with suffering to obeying with unspeakable suffering.

[18 : 52] In the days of his flesh, he would often say, How do you suffer me this generation? That in his days on earth, he suffered on every turn because of people.

But here, his testing or temptation will be stronger as he proves himself, as he passed the temptation that is coming there. And that temptation or that testing that is brought only by the cross.

Look at verse number 40, if you will. And he said, And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that you enter not into temptation. It means that you don't succumb, that you don't give into the testing.

He says it again in verse number 46, that you enter into temptation. We see that three times he comes to them. It's a time of testing is what's happening. It's a dangerous time. It's a desire.

It's a time that sin could pull them away from Christ. But he was tested and he was proven to be perfect and he became the author of our eternal salvation, as it says in Hebrews 5, 9.

[19 : 52] The next question that I gave to you earlier was, was his prayer answered? Because in Hebrews 5, 7, it says that, and he was heard. Was Jesus being heard in this prayer?

What you must ask yourself is what is it that Jesus was asking so that you could determine if his prayer was being heard. It says in verse number 43 in Luke chapter number 22, And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

Jesus, when he came to earth, was born a little lower than the angels and that he was showing his humanity and that he was fully God but fully man and that an angel came and ministered to him.

This isn't the only portion of scripture where we find that term being strengthened. In Acts chapter number 9, Paul prays that as well, that he needs strengthening and there food is brought to him and he is encouraged.

And so Jesus prays to the one who can save his life. His prayer is that his will will be done and an angel has sent the strength in him. Jesus prepared for this testing through demonstrating his dependence on God through prayer.

[21 : 03] And then the question that we must ask. So we look in on this story and I told you it seems like we shouldn't get to see this. This is too personal. This intimate conversation where Jesus cries out in agony as he is moments away from the cross.

The disciples are, they're oblivious, right? They don't seem to understand what is happening or that it's coming or they're not aware of the fact that Judas is about to walk in and the soldiers. But Jesus is very much aware and he is praying and he is prepared for that time of that testing that is going to show his perfection, that's going to show his complete obedience.

But for you and I as disciples of Christ, it's laid out here for us very simply. Jesus says to them, we cross over to the tape, we get into the story, we have the eyewitness account, we have the story from Hebrews, but in Luke 22, 46, the words that Jesus should be our words for the day.

It says this, and he said unto them, why sleep ye, rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation? And I'll say this as simply as I can.

If you and I are not people of prayer, then you and I are not people that are prepared for what is next in the story. If you and I are not people of prayer, then you and I are not people that are prepared for what's next in the story.

[22 : 23] Jesus, who was perfect, Jesus, who was going to face that testing, he went to the Father and in prayer, and he stood up, and Judas comes and kisses him, and he does everything perfectly in dependence to the Father.

But there's a group of disciples. One had betrayed in Peter, Judas, who betrays ultimately, who is not a follower of Christ, but the others, the other ten, what do they do?

And we find that they scattered because they weren't prepared for what was next in the story. They weren't spending that time in prayer. They had been overcome with all the things of this world so that they weren't spending that moment, and they've been urged by the Savior that Jesus went over to them and said, wake up, you need to pray.

He wasn't asking for prayer for him. He wasn't going to succumb to the temptation. He was saying, you need to pray. You need to be prepared because you don't know what's next in this story, but you need to prepare your hearts.

As Kristen will come to play the piano, I want you, if you have the handout, if you didn't get one today, some of you might be trying to read the word at the front. At the top, it's not words. It's Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.

[23 : 37] If you've been trying to sound that word out, it isn't going to work for you, okay? Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. And I would like to encourage you to take 15 minutes a day to ask God to deliver you from temptation, to prepare you for the testing that is going to happen in that.

Jesus here is a prayer of protection and you pray for what is next so that you will not be overwhelmed. And the question is, why are they not praying? Why are the disciples not praying?

Are they not aware of the hour in which they're living in? The answer to that is that they're not. 1 Peter 4, verse 7 tells us this, but in the end of all things is at hand, be you therefore sober and watch unto prayer.

I'll tell you why I don't pray and maybe some of you would say with me that you'd be in agreement. It's just simply this. It's this idea that this is, I got this mentality. But I just, I'm just ready.

Whatever the week's going to hold me. When it comes to me, I'll deal with it in that moment. And here were the disciples that had no idea what was around the corner for them. But there was Jesus saying, wake up and pray.

[24 : 46] There's a testing that's going to come. But they didn't kneel in prayer in that moment. They didn't recognize their dependence. And because of that, when the testing came, they weren't ready for it.

Think back over this last week, over the last month, and you think about the things that came and that temptation that came, and you're tested as well. Jesus is tested all through his earthly ministry. Are you going to depend upon the Father?

Are you going to do things in accordance? Are you going to do things that are away from him? As we see in his days of fasting, all through that, he demonstrates time and time again that he's going to live according to the will of the Father.

There's been times over the last weeks that we didn't live according to the will of the Father. Because when the testing came, our hearts weren't set. We weren't people that had been prepared for it.

And here Jesus calls on us, some of you may think that you're too sinful to pray, and maybe that's what's keeping you from 15 minutes on your knees praying to him. And can I tell you that that sin in your life is going to remain there until you come to him, until you tell him, I'm just not making it on my own.

[25 : 51] I don't have this. I thought I did, but I just, I don't have this. Sober-minded, self-controlled believers will give themselves the prayer.

So let's obey Jesus today. It says in Hebrews chapter number five, it says, in being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.

If you're a believer in here, a description of you as a person who obeys him, that you are letting him be the Lord of your life. And what is it he's called upon us to do as believers?

He calls us to watch and pray, to be sober-minded, to not depend on our own selves and our own strengths and abilities, but to look to him. And so today, a decision for us as believers in that step is to make sure that prayer is a regular rhythm of our lives, that we are coming to him daily and say, God, I don't know what's next to my story, but I want to go and recognize right now that my dependency is upon you.

And if you're here today and you're not following Christ, I want to tell you how wonderful he is. I want you to see as he's going to the cross, he worries about you and I. As he goes to the cross, he does it perfectly.

[27 : 03] As he goes to the cross, he demonstrates obedience and he takes that cup of your sins and your shame, that sin that we have that we're just so shamed of, he took all of it and he drank the cup completely and he took it to himself so that you have the opportunity to have an exchange life, your life for his, his life for you.

And it's wonderful. Would you pray with me? Heavenly Father, as we look upon this passage, Lord, I just am overwhelmed that you would allow us to look in on it and to see the agony, to see a perfect Savior taking the cup in his hand, taking my sin.

Others, I think of this story, I don't just think about the sins of mankind and all through history, but Lord, I know of my sins that put your son upon the cross.

I know my sins that were in that cup that he would take and drink. And Father, I thank you so much that I will never have to stand and deal with the wrath of God for my life, your wrath upon my life, because it was taken upon the cross of Jesus.

With every head bowed, and as you're praying, let me encourage you in here today, if you do not know Jesus Christ as your Savior, allow us this opportunity to explain to you more fully what it means that he took your sins upon him as he went to the cross.

[28 : 29] You can see me in the foyer, go to the next steps table, my email address will be on the screen when we end here today, and you can see that, but let's make sure that you understand what he took for you.

But believer in here, I'd like to encourage you to watch and pray what Jesus has called upon us to do. Why is it we couldn't spend 15 minutes a day upon our knees and let the posture of our body represent the posture of our heart and just lay out before God and say, I may be quite capable in the world that I work in, everybody that sees me may think I'm strong, but I recognize that without you, I'm just going to make a mess of this, and to recognize that we need to be truly dependent upon him.

Heavenly Father, I pray for my brothers and sisters this week, Lord, as I've asked you, Lord, help me be mindful of the fact that I am utterly dependent upon you, and without you, Lord, I could do nothing of any value, nothing, Lord, that would bring you glory.

So, Father, we hear the words of Christ to his disciples as they say, watch and pray, and we hear them today, Lord, as words for us where we may live our lives prepared for the testing that's going to come in the next part of our story by preparing our hearts through prayer.

In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[30 : 05] Amen. Amen.