

Mark 14v26-42. Jesus in Gethsemane

Jesus' agony in Gethsemane is "deeply embedded" in the gospel story. See also Mt. 26v36-46, Lk. 22v40-46, John 18v1-12 and Heb 5v7f.

v32 Here and in Matt26v36 the scene of Jesus' communion with his father is named as Gethsemane. Lk.22v39 has only "the place", John18v1 "a garden". Gethsemane means "olive-press", so it was probably an olive-grove or small olive orchard with an oil press as one of its facilities. It would be located on the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives, about half a mile from the wall of the city- see v26. It was across the brook Cedron, which the Lamb of God went, probably running blood-red from the Passover lambs which had been killed.

1) There is **WEAKNESS** here.v27-31.

Jesus reveals that they will all stumble, "this night" When a shepherd is struck down the sheep scatter. The prophesy of Zech. 13v7 would be fulfilled. But he would meet them again where their homes were and where he had originally called them.

Mark is "Peter's interpreter" and Peter wants to make clear how sure he was that he would never fail, never deny his Lord. Here we have his boastful assertion. We should, before we point the accusing finger at Peter, note that all the disciples said the same, v31.

We need to learn that we are weak apart from the grace of God. JC Ryle, "There is no degree of sin into which the greatest saint may not run, if he is not held up by the grace of God, and if he does not watch and pray". 1 Cor.10v12, Prov.28v26.

There is **HEAVINESS** here.

v32-34 note again the choice of the three. For Gundry, Jesus seeks the help of his three closest disciples. Elsewhere in the gospel(5v37;9v2-8;13v3) the selection is associated with a special revelation of Jesus' unique status. Here they were to witness his unique suffering. The call to the disciples to "watch" is not a request for them to stand guard as it were, but "a call to active participation in his destiny of suffering", Anderson,p.319. They fail him here by sleeping. A call for companionship in this extreme hour, Gould, p.269. We need the help of friends in trouble (the disciples failed here) 1 Cor 12v28, helps are important.

Note the Greek words for "greatly distressed and troubled", which convey his feelings in the strongest possible terms at what lay ahead. Here we have shuddering horror and agony before an end which was not only troubling but amazing. Now this deep distress is expressed in his words, "my soul is very sorrowful even unto death" which is similar to the Psalmist's laments in Ps.42v6;43v5. Gould(ICC), suggests, "My sorrow is killing me". For Gundry we have here the start of his passion, p.854.

There is no mere fear of the physical suffering of death. It is rather the sense of the enormous load of guilt which is to be laid upon him at the cross. In Mk.1v9 he STOOD with sinners, Mk.2v15 he SAT with sinners, Mk. 9v45 he was SENT for sinners, Mk.9v33 he would actually SUFFER for sinners, Mk. 14v24 his blood would be SHED for sinners and now Mk.14v27,36 he would be the SUBSTITUTE who would be SMITTEN (by God) for sinners.

There is **YIELDEDNESS** here.

v35 He falls on the ground and prays. This need not be understood as Gundry does(p. 855) as evidence of Jesus' panic! The imperfect tense is used here, perhaps not during his first prayer but inclusive of the others to follow?

The "hour" for Anderson, in a Christian context it denotes the time appointed by God when he will complete his *saving purpose* in Jesus. He asks us also to note the use of the term in 13v11, 32; and see John 2v4; 5v25; 7v30; 12v23 and 27.

v36 "All things are possible to thee", is followed by the prayer, "Remove this cup from me". But note the reference to the will of God, "not as I will but..." So in praying that the hour might pass from him, Jesus is not setting himself against God's purpose. The request of Jesus is conditional on the will of God. He prays whether it is possible for him to accomplish his work, which he is willing to complete, or do the work of redemption without the sacrificial death.

“Abba” is the everyday address for a human father. It was often used by Jesus and expresses his certainty of a special relationship with God. It is an “intensely personal and intimate” word, (English, p.220). The Aramaic term is explained by “father”. It is used in Rom.8v15; Gal.4v6 to express that deep inner sense of belonging to God’s family.

“this cup” English explains that the cup in a number of OT passages is about suffering and punishment, usually at God’s hand, p.181. So also Gundry, p.869. In his identification with sinners he was to be the object of God’s wrath against sin. In Gethsemane the full horror of this was disclosed. Is.51v22 refers to the cup of God’s fury taken away from Jerusalem. It stands here as a metaphor for retributive punishment. As v41 expresses, the Son of Man was about to be “delivered up” to this for sinners.

He is ready to do what God wills. You ready for God’s purpose for your life? Will you say “Lord, what will you have me to do?”

There is **SADNESS** here. v37-38.

Peter stands out as the leading representative of the disciples as in v29,31. He is addressed, although the plural is used. It is especially for Peter who had promised so much, v29,31, Lk.22v33, Jn.13v37. The challenge, “could you not watch with me? Does Jesus still say with sadness “Can you not give me one hour?” - on a Thursday night or a Sunday morning. Has our private prayer time lessened? It grieves the Saviour when we are careless. We sometimes get stirred up for a week or two but then the waters settle down again.

There is **WATCHFULNESS** here.

“temptation” is peirasmos, which can mean either temptation or testing. First is better here. The focus here is not the outward test which was already set in motion, but the inner weakness which it would challenge, which could lead them into sin. We should watch our conscious thoughts, words and deeds lest we open the door to sin

Watching without praying is self-confidence, praying without watching is foolishness.

“the spirit” Hardly the Holy Spirit but possibly the human spirit under the Holy Spirit’s control? The flesh is prone to yield to Satan’s desires. He will do everything to keep us from prayer.

There is **DUMNESS** here

v39-40. For Gundry, the passing over to a large extent of the other occasions of prayer shows that this is not really where Mark’s interest lies. He goes directly to the sleep of the disciples. They had nothing to say for they had failed again. There was no real human help for him when he should have received it. Our intentions sometimes are not worked out in practice. We will have nothing to say at the judgement seat about our prayerlessness, our carelessness and failure to use our time as we should, 2Cor.5v10.

There is **READINESS** here

v41-42, “the hour has come..... Jesus embraces the hour decreed for him by God. God will it for him but it is also here his own choice. Here we see his voluntary submission to suffering and death.

Note the use of Son of man again and to be “delivered up”, paradidomi, as in Is. 53.

v42 This verse links the story with the arrest of Jesus. Here he is presented as the one who does not wait to be taken but advances with complete assurance to meet the death which has been worked out for him through the betrayer. Anderson(p.321) suggests that the words “let us be going” may be translated, “let us march forward to meet him!” There is no fleeing here.

2 Cor.5v18. Should we not be at our best for him?