CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
NOVEMBER062021

Scripture Story: Mark 14:32-42.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* or *Humble Hero,* chapter 74.

the choice



Photo by Colleen Cahill

flashlight

"[Christ] felt that by sin He was being separated from His Father. The gulf was so broad, so black, so deep, that His spirit shuddered before it. This agony He must not exert His divine power to escape. As man He must suffer the consequences of man's sin. As man He must endure the wrath of God against transgression" (*The Desire of Ages,* p. 686).

keytext

"He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. And He said, 'Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will.' "

(Mark 14:35, 36, NKJV)

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what do you think?

Rank the following moments according to what you think caused Christ the most agony.

____ Enduring the scourging/beating.
____ Hearing His own people cry "crucify Him."
____ Being betrayed and abandoned by His closest friends.
____ Deciding to accept the cup of suffering and sin in Gethsemane.
____ Experiencing the absence of God on Calvary.

All the events surrounding the passion of Christ were severely traumatic. What do you think was most traumatic for Christ? Why? If you had to go through a traumatic experience, would you prefer to have it forced upon you or to face it knowing it was your choice?

did you know?

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Luke, says of Christ, "And being in agony prayed fervently . . ." The Greek word for agony means to be "engaged in combat." The word "agony" was used by the Greeks to denote "intense emotion," and severe emotional and physical anguish. It is the same word they used for the arena in which battles would take place for entertainment. What was so entertaining to them was the intense life-and-death emotion that characterized the games. Clearly, what took place in the Garden of Gethsemane was a battle, filled with intense emotion.

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INTO THE STORY

"Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, 'Sit here while I pray.' And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch.'

"He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. And He said, 'Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will.'

"Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, 'Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.'

"Again He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words. And when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him.

"Then He came the third time and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.'"

(Mark 14:32-42, NKJV)



OUT OF THE STORY

After you read this story, make a list of things Jesus knew and didn't know about the future.

How do you think the disciples reacted to hearing Jesus say, in verse 34, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death" (NKJV)?

When had Christ ever spoken like this or conveyed such emotion?

Underline the phrases in this passage that indicate how much the decision to go forward to Calvary weighed on Christ.

Why did Jesus want the disciples to keep praying? Was it for them or Him that He longed for them to be praying?

How is Christ's attitude in verses 41 and 42 different from the first part of the scene?

Why do you think the story of Gethsemane is such a pivotal story told in Scripture? What does this event reveal about Christ?

What do you think was "the cup" Christ referred to in His prayer to the Father?

punch lines

"For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" **(Hebrews 4:15, 16, NKJV).**

"[Christ] who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered" **(Hebrews 5:7, 8, NKJV).**

"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" **(2 Corinthians 5:21, NKJV).**

"And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He spoke this word openly. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, 'Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men' " **(Mark 8:31-33, NKJV).**

"The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father" **(John 10:17, 18, NIV).**

further insight

"So dreadful does sin appear to Him, so great is the weight of guilt which He must bear, that He is tempted to fear it will shut Him out forever from His Father's love."

—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages,* p. 685

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read John 10:17, 18.

Read and respond to the question in the *What Do You Think?* section of this week's lesson. Does it matter that Christ had the choice to go to Calvary or to walk away? Of all the painful experiences that faced Christ in the garden, the reality of our hopelessness pained him more. In a way, what happened after He made His choice was horrible, but by that time He had resolved to endure it. Reflect on the fact that Christ was not the victim caught between a rock and a hard place, but a Savior willingly offering His life as a sacrifice. What do you think is the difference?

Sunday

Read Hebrews 5:7, 8.

Read the *Into the Story* section and use the questions in the *Out of the Story* section to guide your study. Up to this point in the life of Christ, He had been in control and deliberate about God's plan. But in Gethsemane this attitude changed. Christ's humanity shrank from the task and longed for another way, but finally accepted the hard part of the plan. What do you think are some of the key truths that emerge about Christ and you in the Garden of Gethsemane? In what way does a similar spiritual war occur in your life today? What message does Christ's victory in the garden give to you as you make choices about your life?

Monday

Read Mark 14:35, 36.

The *Key Text* this week is perhaps the hardest prayer to pray: "Not what I will, but what You will." In what areas of your life do you find it difficult to pray this prayer? What is it about God's will that tends to make us hesitant to embrace it? Is there any question that God has our best in mind? Or, is it that God's ways of accomplishing His will in our lives aren't always what we would choose?

Take a few moments and identify three or four friends that you believe want to live fully for God. Pray a prayer of surrender to God's will as the Savior did in the garden for yourself and for your friends.

Tuesday

Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.

Read the quote in the *Flashlight* section and imagine the worst of what sin can do. Consider the most repulsive of sin's effects on this earth and on people, and reflect on what must have made Christ "shudder" against what He was going to face. As hard as it is to wonder what Christ faced, as sinners we can never imagine what sin looks like from the perspective of One who "knew no sin." Whom do you know that has a real hatred for sin and a deep sense of the love of God?

If Ellen White emphasizes anything in this chapter, it is the full exposure of both hatred of sin and love of God. Make a list in your journal of what you love about God's love and a list of the things you hate about sin. Write out a prayer of thanksgiving to God for His will and His willingness to redeem you.

Wednesday

The *Punch Lines* texts in this week's lesson touch on Christ's choice to embrace God's will and die for humanity. Read the list and identify two or three that really speak to you personally. Why do these passages connect with you today? If you were to order these verses to be read in a sequence like a Bible study, how would you organize them? Think of someone you know who might be encouraged or inspired by these passages and share them. Feel free to add any other verses you think would encourage or inspire.

Thursday

Read Hebrews 4:15, 16.

Gethsemane was about a choice. Clearly, the most important decision made on earth happened in that garden. It is likely that you have some pressing decisions to make in your life, but none more important than accepting Christ's sacrifice for you. Sometime this week, go to a garden, or the closest thing to a garden, and make the decision to receive God's grace and embrace His will for your life. You might want to take a few moments to journal or write about your experience in the garden and keep it in your Bible for future reference.

Friday

Read 1 Corinthians 15:22.

Two choices. Two gardens. Reflect on the choice made in Eden, which ushered in a world of sin for humanity. Also, reflect on the choice Christ made in the Garden of Gethsemane thousands of years later. A third choice still remains that opens the way to eternal life in a garden home in heaven. Adam and Eve made a choice. Christ made His choice. What will be your choice?

this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages or *Humble Hero*, chapter 74.

**Humble Hero* is a special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URIhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.

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