

HE DID IT FOR YOU!
Mark 14:32-36
Hebrews 5:5-9; 9:11-15

Last week we began a brief journey to the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ as we looked at the temptation of Simon Peter. We saw how Satan came to Jesus and asked permission to sift Simon as wheat, and we saw that Jesus gave him permission to do so. And so the devil went right to work and made short work of Peter, causing him to deny Jesus three times in one night and causing him great heartache and discouragement. But we also saw that through the sifting process Simon came out on top, that though his courage failed his faith did not fail, and that it did not fail because Jesus was praying for him. And we learned that just as Jesus prayed for Peter He also prays for us when we go through Satan's sifter, and our faith will not fail, either.

But we learned something else about Satan's sifting. We learned that victory over Satan doesn't have to be after he has already sifted us and beaten us up and defeated us. We saw that we can turn the devil's sifting on its head and sift him instead. And that comes as we pray as Jesus told His disciples to pray in the Garden, and as we are perceptive to Satan's devices. And when we pray and are perceptive of Satan by the Holy Spirit then God will be glorified in our lives day by day.

So today I have a new question concerning Satan's siftings for you. And that is, if Satan would have sifted Simon Peter as wheat, would he have had that same desire for Jesus as well? If he tempted Peter to deny Jesus as He was on the way to Calvary, would he also have had a special temptation to hurl at Jesus? Well, you can be certain that he did, and today we are going to learn about it and its effect upon Jesus, and how He overcame it by the power of God.

In Mark 14:32-36 we read;

"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*."

From the moment that Jesus emerged from Mary's womb Satan's highest purpose was to kill Him before He could die on the cross. You remember that immediately after the baby Jesus was dedicated in the temple, Joseph and Mary had to flee with Him to Egypt lest he be murdered in Herod's massacre of all the baby boys in the land two years old and under. But beloved, that heinous act was inspired by much more than the rage of an insecure, jealous king. It was hatched in the pits of hell, and Herod was merely the hatchet man doing the devil's bidding. But after he failed, at least three times (Luke 4: 28f; John 8:59; John 10:39) the scribes and Pharisees tried to seize Jesus in order to stone Him, but He also escaped out of their hands, at least twice miraculously; the Scripture indicates that He seemed to just disappear right before their very eyes.

But if Satan couldn't kill the Lord Jesus he had a plan B. And that was, he tried his best to cause Jesus to sin before He got to the cross. You remember, of course, his three temptations to Jesus in the wilderness at the outset of Jesus' ministry. And though these were unsuccessful, they were by no means that last time he hurled his fiery darts at our Lord. For Luke writes that after Satan's final rebuke by Christ he left Jesus **until an opportune time** (Luke 4:13). And you can be sure that over and over in the next three years the devil found many other opportune times to tempt Jesus to sin.

But have you ever wondered why that Satan was trying so desperately to keep a sinless Christ off of the cross? Because Jesus' **sinless death** spelled Satan's **sure defeat**, and the devil knew it. The writer of Hebrews says in Heb. 2:14 that through death Jesus "might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil". When Jesus died the gates of hell were sealed shut forever to any sinner who puts his trust in Jesus to forgive his sins. For Jesus has already suffered his punishment, paying his sin debt in full so that there's no more penalty, and the devil's dominion in that sinners' life was totally destroyed. Paul writes about this in Romans 5:18, "Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life". The offense of one man was Adam's sin, which led to all men's condemnation. And the righteous act of one man was Jesus' death, which resulted in the gift of salvation being offered to all.

So Satan's main mission in life was to keep Jesus off of the cross, because he knew that Jesus' death **sealed his defeat**. But worse than that, he also knew that Jesus' resurrection three days later would **seal his doom**. For the grave was the devil's silver bullet against Jesus and if the grave wouldn't hold Him he would have no more defense from the wrath and punishment of Almighty God.

And so for 33 years the devil has failed in his mission to block the sinless Son of God from going to the cross to die. He hasn't killed Jesus and he hasn't enticed Him to sin. And now Jesus has come to Gethsemane to pray, and Satan knows that Gethsemane is his last shot. If Jesus dies on the cross the next day the clock starts ticking on his own eternal death. It is now or never.

Now, in our text we do not actually read of Satan tempting Jesus as He prayed. But from what Mark says and from what Jesus says to His disciples we have no doubt that he was there, tormenting Jesus with his taunts and lies. Look at verse 33; the word "troubled" in the Greek means to be "greatly amazed" and "struck with terror". But what caused His amazement? What caused His terror? It was His preview of the hours that lay ahead of Him. Beloved, I stand with the old expositor G. Campbell Morgan, who says that the events in Gethsemane are almost too sacred to explore. But by the grace of God and the Holy Spirit's teaching I want us to try to just get a peek at them and worship.

When Jesus entered Gethsemane He began to look at what lay ahead of Him in the next few hours and saw the scourging, the nails in His hands and feet, the spear in His side, and it was no doubt troubling. But much, much worse He saw Himself becoming the sin of every man, woman, boy, and girl in history. Paul writes, "For He has made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). And the weight of the sin of the whole world on His sinless shoulders was almost more than Jesus could bear.

But I want to point out to you something that we sometimes forget that compounds Jesus' agony even greater. Look back at verse 27. Jesus is quoting Zechariah 13:7 here, where God the Father is saying, "I will strike the Shepherd". Sometimes when we think of the cross we think of the Father standing back almost aloof of what is going on. Sure He sees and sure He is grieving, but He is grieving from afar. But that is not the case at all. It was the Father who held the bitter cup to His Son's lips and said, "Drink it!" And it was the Father who meted out the punishment of sin upon His Son, every bit of it. For it was the same punishment that He would have meted out upon you and upon me had not Jesus stepped forward to take our place; oh, the suffering of hell was bad enough. But Jesus looked ahead and saw it coming from His Father's hand, and then saw His Father turn and walk away and leave Him all alone for the first time in all eternity, and His grief was so overwhelming that He says in verse 34 that He was sorrowful even unto death.

Now, Jesus did not mean that He thought He might die in Gethsemane from overwhelming grief. He knew that if God did not remove the cup of suffering He would go to Calvary and drink it. But here's what I believe He meant. He meant that

were it not for God's intervention, His sorrow could have been enough to kill Him. For in Luke 22:43 we read that an angel came from Heaven to Jesus to strengthen Him to endure the profound agony that He felt. And He did strengthen Jesus, and so He didn't die and He didn't bail. But just as surely an angel was in the Garden strengthening Jesus, Satan was right there, too, whispering things to Jesus like, "Jesus, are you sure you really want to go through with this? Why not just call those 12 legions of angels you spoke about that are standing ready to take flight to you this very moment?" And of course, Jesus could have called them. And as you seek to fathom the mystery as to why Jesus could have called them and could have rejected the cross but didn't, never forget that He did it for you!

So we see that Jesus was indeed the Man of Sorrows, just like Isaiah said He would be (Isaiah. 53:3). But in Gethsemane we not only see Jesus' sorrows, we see His **supplications**. Look again at verse 36a "And He said, "Abba, Father, all things *are* possible for You. Take this cup away from Me". It is impossible to see the gut-wrenching emotion in Jesus' prayer from this brief statement. But the writer of Hebrews gives us much more insight into this.

"So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but *it was* He who said to Him: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You." As *He* also says in another *place*: "You *are* a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek"; 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: 5-8)

In verse 7 we see Jesus' **supplication**. Vehement cries and tears. Luke writes that Jesus' sweat was as great drops of blood as He prayed. Beloved, it is certainly truth that Jesus chose to go to the cross to die for you and me. Oh, but there was a part of Jesus physically and spiritually that did not want to go to the cross!! And He cried out to His Father with all of His being to spare Him the horrors of the cross if there was any way possible, and His Father heard Him, because Jesus was godly! The most worthy person of an answer to ever utter a prayer. Imagine the agony of the Father as well as the Son!

In verse 8 we see Jesus' **submission**. He obeyed!

"For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God,

cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”(Hebrews 9:13-14)

Notice, Jesus offered Himself. First He offered up prayers and supplications for His deliverance, and when God said, “No, Son”, He offered Himself. He offered Himself without spot to His Father. The perfect, holy Lamb of God.

In verse 9 we see Jesus’ **salvation**. Jesus’ submission to death gives eternal life, but only to all who obey Him.

- He was the Savior by His obedience, verse 8.
- We are the saved by our obedience, verse 9.