

THE AWESOME GLORY OF CHRIST
(In His Victory over Satan, part #1)
Luke 22: 39-46; John 18:1-12

When Jesus entered the Garden of Gethsemane the night before He died, He was about to enter into a fray with the devil like He had never had before. We know that the devil had tempted Him before, the first time being at the very beginning of His ministry. And you know the story. The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, and the devil tempted Jesus three times and struck out. And the Bible says that the devil left Jesus until an opportune time (Luke 4:13). Now, you can be sure that that opportune time wasn't too long coming, if the devil tempted Jesus with any frequency at all like he tempts you and me. I have no doubt that the devil tempted Jesus many, many more times that we are not aware of.

But one other time we know that Satan tempted Jesus was through one of His own disciples, Simon Peter. When Jesus told His disciples that He was going to die and be raised from the dead three days later, Peter said, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You". And you remember what Jesus said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan!" And that should be a somber warning to every one of us. For if the devil used Peter to try to discourage Jesus and sabotage the will of God he certainly would not hesitate to use us to do the same thing to a brother or sister in Christ.

But of all the temptations that Jesus encountered in His ministry, none could compare with His temptation in the Garden of Gethsemane. For this was the devil's last shot, and he knew it. If he could not derail Jesus' journey to the cross in the Garden, his program for this world would be destroyed and he would be damned forever. And you can be sure that every demon in hell

was called up to active duty and sent to Gethsemane to join forces with Satan and insure his victory.

Now, when we begin to talk about what happened in Gethsemane we enter into a holy, mysterious sanctuary. Human mind cannot fathom the intensity of the spiritual conflict between Jesus and Satan. But one thing you can be sure of – there was never a doubt about the outcome! In Luke 10 Jesus told His disciples that He saw Satan fall like lightning out of Heaven. That was before the world was ever created when Satan rebelled against God. And He also told His disciples that He was giving them authority over all the power of the enemy. The disciples themselves had all authority over Satan and every demon. So it goes without question that the One Who gave them that authority has all power of the enemy as well. And Jesus proved it in Mark 5 when He cast a legion of demons out of a demoniac, and a Roman legion was 6,000 men, and sometimes up to as many as 6800 (Believer's Study Bible, notes, Luke 8:30).

But having said that, we know from Luke's account that it was a battle royal in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before Jesus died. Luke says that after admonishing His disciples to pray He withdrew from them and began to pray alone. And He prayed, "Father, if it is Your will take this cup from Me." Now, some believe that Jesus was praying that He would not die from the grief of His soul in the Garden, lest He miss the cross. But death in the Garden is not the cup that Jesus was talking about. The cup was the agony of bearing in His body the sins of the world. When Peter whacked off the ear of Malchus just a little later, Jesus told him, "Put up your sword, Peter. Shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given Me?" The cup was the cup of the Crucifixion.

And both Jesus' humanness and His deity recoiled in stark terror when thinking of the cup that lay just ahead. His humanness looked at the pain and the utter shame of hanging

naked on a cross. He looked at all the pain and shame and scorn and He was horrified. But His deity saw the filth of all the world's sins that He would become, and He was more horrified. Mark 14:33 tells us that as Jesus prayed He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. The Greek words mean that He was greatly amazed and astonished. He looked at the whole package of suffering, shame, abandonment by His Father, and death, and He was astonished. And He said to Peter, James, and John, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death". He knew that He would not die in the Garden, but the utter anguish He felt made it seem like it. It was so bad that Jesus' sweat became mingled with blood as the capillaries in His forehead burst from the anxiety. No wonder that Isaiah said 700 years earlier that Jesus would be a man of sorrows!! Beloved, of all the human beings who ever drew breath on planet earth, no one ever sorrowed like Jesus!!! Glory be to God!

But what a raging battle the devil was waging in Gethsemane! Because he knew that if Jesus wanted to, He could call it all off. As we said just recently, Jesus had the final word about His death on the cross. He said in John 10, "...I lay down My life....No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself" (Jn. 10:17-18).

But I want to try to give you just a small peek at the agony of God the Father in the midst of all this. The book of Hebrews gives us a unique, gut-wrenching picture of the pleas of Jesus to His Father in Gethsemane. You know how much you love your children. You know how much you want to alleviate their suffering if you possibly can. Heb. 5:7 says that Jesus offered up vehement cries and tears to Him Who was able to save Him from death. Think about that. Vehement cries and tears. Jesus was pleading with all of His being to His Father that if it were possible

He would not have to die on the cross. Let me say again, this is a great mystery. We saw just a few weeks ago that when Jesus came into the world He said to His Father, "I delight to do Your will, O Lord", and God's will for Jesus was the cross. And Rev. 13:8 declares that Jesus was slain from the foundation of the world. But in the Garden Jesus begged His Father to make another way for the salvation of the world if it were possible. He begged with groanings and tears. And Hebrews 5:7 says that the Father heard His Son. Oh, only Heaven knows how much the Father's heart was crushed in the Garden of Gethsemane when He heard His Son's cries and said, "No, My beloved Son. There's no other way. If men are to be saved, You must go to the cross!"

Now, I want you to see something so very, very precious. When God the Father said, "No, Son, You must go to the cross", what happened next? Speaking of Jesus, Hebrews 9:14 says, "...who through he eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God..." Jesus offered up prayers and cries for deliverance, and when God said "No", Jesus offered up Himself. The almighty, holy, Creator of the universe, the One Who could have called 10,000 angels to His rescue (Matt. 26:53) said, "All right, Father. Your will be done. Here is My life. I lay it down totally for You". And beloved, the moment He uttered these words, Satan was totally defeated and his doom was sealed. It was just a matter of time before the hammer fell.

Now, I want you to see a demonstration of Jesus' victory over Satan from the Book of John. Turn to John 18 (read v. 1-12). John chooses to leave out many of the details of Jesus' struggles in the Garden. But he shares one experience that no other gospel writer records, and I'm so glad! John picks up the story after Jesus' agonizing prayer and His submission to the Father's will, when Judas enters Gethsemane with an attachment of Roman

troops to arrest our Lord. Notice how Jesus takes charge of the whole scene.

- Jesus doesn't shrink back, but walks forward to meet them.
- Jesus demonstrates His power by simply speaking His name, and 600 soldiers plus all the Jewish contingency with them are laid out prostrate on the ground.
- After Peter recklessly chops off the ear of the high priest's servant, Jesus serves His enemies by putting it back on.

And then, as I've said before, we have one of the most comical scenes in all of the Bible. Jesus blows them off of their feet, then they pick themselves back up, dust themselves off, walk up to Jesus and say, "Stick out your hands, Jesus. You're under arrest". And then they bind him and lead Him away. That would be like you walking up to an escaped gorilla and saying "Stick out your hands, Mr. Gorilla, you're going back to the zoo", and then binding him with a couple of strands of knitting yarn and trying to lead him away. Good luck! But beloved, don't ever forget. From the moment that Jesus entered the Garden of Gethsemane that night until they led Him out to His treacherous trials, He was the victor and Satan was crushed.

What practical lessons can we learn from Jesus' passion and arrest in Gethsemane?

1. Following the will of God is not easy. For Jesus it led to a cross. But guess what? For anyone to follow the will of God, it leads to a cross. Jesus said, “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me” (Matt. 16:24). Beloved, there are a lot of Jesus fans in the church. There’s a lot that will come on Sunday and sing His praises and get their Jesus fix for the week. There are lots of fans, but there are few followers. There are a lot of slackers and only a few trackers. Few who take up their crosses. Few who deny themselves any pleasure to serve Jesus. Jesus gets their leftover time and their leftover money. What about you? Are you a fan or a follower of Jesus? A slacker or a tracker?

2. The power of God is always there for those who follow Christ. When Jesus in the very crucible of temptation in the Garden, Luke 22:43 says that an angel appeared to Him from Heaven, strengthening Him.

3. There is power in the name of Jesus! (John 18:6)

In the NT there was salvation in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:12). There was healing in the name of Jesus (Acts 3:6). There was deliverance from demons in the name of Jesus (Acts 16:18). Jesus said, “If you ask anything in My name, I will do it” (John 14:14). Everything we have comes through Christ (Eph. 1:3; Phil. 4:19)

4. Jesus drank your bitter cup. (John 18:11). Friend, the cup of suffering on the cross was not Jesus’ cup. He did nothing worthy of such suffering and death. He was the perfect Son of God. No, the bitter cup of suffering belonged to you and to me.