

IN THE GARDEN (MK. 14:32-42)

Mk. 14:32 And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. ³³ And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; ³⁴ And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch. ³⁵ And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. ³⁶ And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt. ³⁷ And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour? ³⁸ Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak. ³⁹ And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words. ⁴⁰ And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer him. ⁴¹ And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴² Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

In the very early hours of the Friday morning, after having celebrated the Passover meal, Jesus and eleven of His disciples entered the Garden of Gethsemane. ... The only disciple who wasn't there was Judas Iscariot, for he had already left during the meal and gone to agree a deal with the Jewish leaders to betray Jesus. ...

Just a short distance inside the Garden, Jesus told His disciples He was going to pray. He instructed eight of the eleven, - Andrew, Nathanael, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddeus, Matthew, Philip, Simon the Zealot, and Thomas, - to sit, and Lk. 22:40 tells us He told them to pray specifically, *Pray that ye enter not into temptation.* ... That was a *warning* of the imminent approaching danger ... They should immediately have taken heed, and determined themselves to pray ... Previously, the Lord Jesus had taught them, *Mt. 6:13 lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil* ... and *that* is what they should have been doing ... *praying, like never before!*

Then He took Peter, James, and John a little further, - those were the disciples He was particularly close to ... and, in their presence, He *began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy* (v.33) [*Greek aorist, 3rd person singular*] ... The burden He carried He bore alone.

What must it have been like for Peter, James and John to see Jesus like this? ... He was always the One to calm the difficult situations down. When they were hungry, He provided the food. When they were in the boat during the storms, He commanded the winds to cease ... They had never seen Him like this before ... How His face must have been strained, His eyes welling up with tears ... His distress, His anxiety ... They had never seen this before, and it was more than any human being had ever experienced.

... Mark records that Jesus was *amazed!* ... The word is ἐκθαμβέω, and it means to be thrown into terror, to be struck with fear ... *That* is how Jesus, the Son of God, became ... and the three disciples had never seen this before ... and neither was it like anything Jesus Himself had ever known!

Indeed, His whole life on earth was an encounter He had never known before ... Before He came to Bethlehem, He had never experienced being born, and growing up as a son ... being obedient to a mother and a father. Before coming into this world, He had never been insulted or hated ... These were issues He never had to face in eternity ... And when it came to the Garden ... and to the crushing realities of facing the cross, He was indescribably 'sore amazed' and 'very heavy'.

... And it was about much more than His rejection by the nation of Israel, the defection of Judas, the impending desertion of the eleven disciples, the mockery, the insults, the scourging, the crucifixion, and the dying ... The agony of torment Jesus was suffering was much more than all that, for, - there in the Garden, - it was the anticipation, - drawing closer and closer, - of becoming the Father's sacrifice as the sin-bearer of His people.

... He has never known sin. Sin puts a distance between God and the sinner, - Jesus had never experienced anything like that before, because He and His Father were and are one (Jn. 10:30). ... He had never been apart from His Father, and He has never known His Father's rejection. Not only does sin bring separation and rejection from God, but it also brings the wrath of God. He has never been cut off from His Father before, and He has never known His Father's wrath. ... His Father **II Cor. 5:21** *made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin* ... And here at this point, Jesus the man, - the Son of God, - was *struggling!* ... He was 'amazed', He was 'very heavy' ... straining under the load of God's will for the salvation of His people. ... For every eternity in Hell due to every believer Christ would save, *that* was the punishment to be suffered He was waiting to endure. ... Multiply that by every redeemed believer ... and that is why the burden about to be laid on Him made Him 'sore amazed' and 'very heavy'. ... He was facing *countless* eternities in Hell upon His own precious and sinless body.

We have to be extremely careful here for we are looking at something which is away beyond our capability to totally grasp ... And through our weakness to be able to understand and describe adequately, we do not want to portray the

Saviour as anything less than God, Who from before the beginning of time, planned every detail of our salvation ... including the agonising and the harrowing ... Jesus is God ... and He came into this world knowing *exactly* what He was coming to ... and He knew *precisely* what was included in Gethsemane and at Calvary, for He, - along with the Father and the Holy Spirit, - determined it. ... However, while as the holy God He knew all that would take place ... as the perfect Man, the enormity of it was staggering!

And, - in the darkness of Gethsemane, - as Peter, James, and John looked at the Saviour, and as they realised something of His anguish, they did not say a word. They were silent. They did not ask Jesus what they could do for Him, because they felt so incapable ... so 'out of their depth'! ... They said nothing. They spoke not a word. And then Jesus confessed to them, ³⁴ *My soul is exceeding sorrowful [overcome with sorrow] unto death ...* It was so prolific, it was unbearable ... and the disciples saw the sweat drops of blood forming on His forehead and His face ... and He appealed to them, *tarry ye here, and watch.* ... And implied within their 'tarrying' and 'watching' was His dependence upon them to tarry, and watch, and pray.

Then He went a few more steps by Himself, - a stone's throw away (Lk. 22:41) ... He fell on His knees, and cried and wept ... and the pressure was so intense, - the sweat drops of blood ... it ('hematidrosis', cf. Lk. 22:43) would have killed most men, had it not been for His Father Who sent an angel to strengthen Him (Lk. 22:43).

He cried, and wept in such, - dare I say, from a human perspective, - ... such uncontrollable agony, **Mk. 14:36** *And he said, Abba [affectionate, intimate, personal], Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup [an Old Testament symbol of Divine wrath ... that is what He referred to when He would shortly tell Peter, Jn. 18:11 Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?] from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt [cf. Lk. 2:49 my Father's business]. ... Father, if there is any way, free me from this suffering ... and yet, - all the time, - He knew the pain and anguish which had been set before Him to endure, He would face it decisively and steadfastly for it was His Father's will for the salvation of His people. ... He would not shirk His duty. ... Father, all things are possible unto thee ... Yes, that is true, but at the same time God could not allow His Son to turn away from going to Calvary, for **Heb. 9:22** without shedding of blood is no remission [no forgiveness of sins].*

... Let's emphasise something else here too ... I would not want to think Jesus suffered in vain ... I do not believe there was any aspect of His suffering ineffectual ... None of His precious blood flowed in vain, - none of it was wasted, - every drop was accounted for ... I would not want Him suffering for souls who never would be saved, because that means the devil would have succeeded in draining Jesus unnecessarily ... No, it is another reason why I believe the Saviour never suffered any more than His Father required, for His suffering was *particular*, in that He endured the Garden and the cross for His own people whom He had eternally planned to redeem.

He arose from off His knees and He went back to Peter, James, and John ... and He wakened Peter ... He called him Simon, and that's because he was acting more like his old self, - that is, more like a 'Simon' than a 'Peter', - before Jesus met him and gave him a new name - ... and you hear the hurt and disappointment in the Saviour's voice, ... Simon, you are sleeping, could you not watch with me for an hour, *watch and pray!* ...

How we often waste precious time we can never redeem. In a few short hours Peter would be sitting around the fire of the people who condemned Jesus ... A certain maid would identify him as having been with Jesus, but he would deny it. Someone else accused him of the same, but again he would deny it ... Then, **Lk. 22:59** *And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaean.* ... Previously, before the Saviour was arrested, when the Saviour asked Peter to watch for an hour ... instead, he fell asleep ... And yet, he remained awake for an hour in the company of a gathering he should not have been with. ... Wasted moments! ... Jesus told him to watch and pray, but he 'let Him down'.

And the reason Simon Peter and the disciples were sleeping was because of their sorrow (Lk. 22:45), - it is not because they were tired, but it was because the sorrow and anguish had overwhelmed them. They had *not* anticipated *this!* ... But it was still no excuse for Jesus was not merely 'sorrowful', but He was '*exceeding* sorrowful' (Mk. 14:34) ... They were not going through anything near what Jesus was going through ... and yet, *He* did not sleep ... And to Peter in particular, He warned, **Mk. 14:38** *Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.* ... You are in danger ... Keep alert and praying! How true it is ...
38 *The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak ...*

There is another beautiful thought here, and it is this ... No matter how busy Jesus is, He always has time for His people ... even down to an individual ... even one like Peter! ... He is altogether reliable, at any time, and in any situation ... It is what the writer to the Hebrews confirmed, **Heb. 4:14** *Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. ¹⁵ For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

And the Saviour went away again, - a stone's throw, - and He prayed the same prayer to His Father, - there is nothing wrong with repeating our prayers, as long as the Lord sees our heart truly committed to what we pray! He returned to Peter, James, and John ... but they were asleep *again*, - He must have disturbed them for they did not know what to say. He went away the third time to pray, and comes back, and they were sleeping again. He awakened them, - and the other eight disciples also, - **Mk. 14:41** ... *and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest [get your strength]: it is enough [that's it], the hour is come ... We are moving on, behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴² Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.* ... Jesus knew what every moment held for Him, - Jesus, perfect God and perfect man ... His heart was racing as He anticipated what was about to happen ... And He brought all eleven of His disciples together because very soon the twelfth disciple, Judas Iscariot, the Jewish leaders, and the Roman soldiers would come to find and arrest Him. ... They were on their way.

This was the Garden of Gethsemane, on the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives, east of the holy city of Jerusalem ... And this was *holy* ground for any ground upon which the Lord Jesus stood was holy ground ... and the enemy was about to defile it. ... Here we are granted insights into the Saviour's heart ... insights we probably find nowhere else in Scripture. Apart from the cross, His great agony in the Garden is unsurpassed. ... It did not diminish His Godhood, and neither did it increase His humanity, - both were kept in perfect balance throughout the plan of God. ... But there, - in the Garden, - this was the most abhorrent grief and torment of mind, - more than was ever experienced by any man! His sorrow, - even in the Garden, - was overflowing. It was overwhelming, as He anticipated drinking from the cup of God's wrath.

This was the devil confronting Him ... He has faced the devil before, and repelled him ... The devil does not give up though. If he could stop Jesus

going to the cross, he would stop the Gospel story. If there would be no cross, there would be no sacrifice, and if there would be no sacrifice there would be no salvation, and if there would be no salvation there would be no Saviour.

Previously, - at the start of the Lord's ministry, - the devil wanted Him to make bread out of stones ... so He would not starve to death. He wanted Jesus to jump off a tower ... but to make sure His angels catch Him so He would not die. The devil also tried to get Jesus to bow down and worship him, - that was the ultimate. Satan offered Jesus the world, *without the suffering* ... without having to die, **Mt. 4:9** *All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me*, ... but Jesus rebuffed him every time. ... But behind each of these conversations Satan had with the Saviour ... *he did not want Jesus to die* ... He did not want Jesus to be the Sacrifice Who would die to free sinners from out of his domain ... He tried to tempt Jesus away from the cross, for on the cross the Saviour would bruise the head of the devil, with irrevocable and eternal consequences!

Satan knew the cross was his defeat! Satan knew the cross would lose him countless souls, for whom the Saviour would victoriously die ... And that is why Satan's hope in the Garden of Gethsemane was to make one more great effort to keep Jesus from Calvary. He didn't want the Saviour to *die*, but he wanted the Son of God *defy* His Father, "I can't do it! ... Take away this cup from Me, for I cannot do it!" ... That is what Satan wanted to hear Jesus say!

... And if Satan had succeeded, the Saviour would not have fulfilled the eternal purpose of the Godhead, man's sin would not have been dealt with, and Hell would have been the only eternal destination for men and women, boys and girls. It would have meant an empty Heaven, a fictitious Bible, a deceptive salvation ... for Satan would be king, if he had succeeded in turning the Saviour away from Calvary.

... But Heaven is not empty, God's Word is true, salvation is real, and *God*, - not Satan, - *is King!* ... Jesus was not in two minds as to what to do, for He had previously announced, **Jn. 9:4** *I must work the works of him that sent me*. He would not be held back for He would accomplish perfectly and completely all that was required of Him ... Luke describes the Saviour's attitude like this, **Lk. 9:51** *And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem*. ... Even in Gethsemane, Jesus repelled

the torments of Satan, and maintained His path towards the cross. ... That is what Jesus did for you and me ... *in the Garden of Gethsemane.*

Edward Hammond was born in America in 1831. He was educated at various American colleges and universities, but he finished his theological education at Edinburgh University. While here in Scotland, he preached regularly in areas where there was no Christian evangelical witness. He and his wife visited the land of Israel, where he walked through the Garden of Gethsemane. It had such an impact upon him that he wrote the following hymn,

My Jesus, I would ne'er forget,
That hour I spent with Thee;
When there I saw Thy bloody sweat
In dark Gethsemane.

'Twas in that olive grove I felt
That Thou hadst died for me;
Alas, how great I saw my guilt
While in Gethsemane.

I thought of how Thy heart did throb,
While all Thine own did flee,
And left Thee with the cruel mob,
In sad Gethsemane.

'Twas there I felt my grief and shame
In oft forsaking Thee,
How precious was Thy very name
In dear Gethsemane.

Should e'er our love to Thee grow cold,
And we forgetful be,
We'll call to mind Thy love untold
While in Gethsemane.