

## In The Garden (Mt. 26:36-46)

This is an extremely sorrowful passage of Scripture. We meet the Saviour at His lowest, and we are confronted with the disciple's failure to stand by Him ... even though they had previously assured Him of their undying commitment.

The clouds had been gathering over Jerusalem, the storm was beginning, and the cruellest event ever was approaching. Just a few days previously, Jesus had shared with Philip and Andrew, [Jn. 12:23](#) *The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. ... 27 Now is my soul troubled. The soul of God was troubled!* He was restless. He was anxious. He was distressed for He knew the volume of the burden He was to bear. No matter how sincerely we try to understand, we could never begin to imagine how much Jesus endured on our behalf!

The anguish of His soul began even before one solitary member of the high priest's company made their way into Gethsemane. His anguish began not because of their evil presence ... but His anguish began as He considered the manner by which He would be obedient to the Father's will in taking upon Himself your sins and mine. ... He put *Himself* into this agony, - it was the Father's will that He should bruise Him. Jesus Christ was the eternal freewill offering, - the Lamb of God upon the altar of Calvary. [Jn. 10:18](#) *No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.*

Let's go into Gethsemane and retrace the steps as they are described to us in God's infallible and inerrant Word. First of all ...

## THE PLEADING OF THE SAVIOUR

He left eight of the disciples just inside the entrance to the garden. The work of salvation He alone could complete. In these days of great confusion, how important it is to hold on to this Biblical truth that there is no other intercessor or mediator for men and women, boys and girls *except Jesus Christ!* Upon Him alone was *laid* all the emotional torment and the physical pain of the vast and terrible load of our sin.

Even though He bore such an inestimable burden, - a burden known only to God, - our Saviour never became a sinner. He was never personally defiled or tainted ... He was as perfect and blameless when He died on the cross as when He left Heaven to come into Bethlehem ... but yet the Father dealt with Him as the One Who *alone* carried all our sins.

In Is. 53:4, Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted ... we see *the burdened One*. In Is. 53:5, But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities ... we see *the bruised One*: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed ... we see *the bleeding One*. In Is. 53:6, All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all ... we see *the bearing One*.

The crushing of His soul began in Gethsemane, ... for so Isaiah described it, 53:5 he was bruised for our iniquities. Before a single nail or spear pierced His precious body ... the Saviour was already pleading. The cause of such agony was the burden of our iniquities, under the overwhelming anguish of Divine wrath.

Just for a moment, look again at Is. 53:5, and *with his stripes we are healed*. In the Hebrew language, the word is actually a singular noun ... and so, more correctly, it ought to be translated, *with his stripe we are healed*. ... Therefore, it was an *exact* judgement, and a *measured* judgement. It emphasises that not

one drop of Christ's blood was shed in vain, and it brings before us again the particular redemptive atoning work of Christ on the cross. He did all that was necessary, and the devil cannot boast He extracted from Christ *anything* beyond the Father's will.

God was in control at Gethsemane and on Calvary. Sin was powerful, yes, but our God is far more powerful than sin can ever be. Yes, sin was at its cruellest, and what is 'sin' but 'lawlessness' because [Is. 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way.](#) ... I am as guilty of bringing Christ through Gethsemane and on to Calvary as Judas Iscariot, His betrayer, or the high priest and his company, or the Roman governor Pilate, or the soldiers who nailed Him to the tree for it was my sin the Lord hath laid upon Him.

The 'bruising' of Christ began in Gethsemane, - the 'an oil press'. That's where the juice would have been pressed out of the grapes ... And that is where God Himself 'pressed heavily' upon His Son the necessity of becoming the sinner's Substitute ... Isaiah explains, [Is. 53:10 it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief.](#)

The Lord Jesus had just finished eating the Passover meal, and it was always a solemn occasion as they remembered the plight of their ancestors in Egypt, and their subsequent exodus ... but the greatest weight that occupied Jesus that evening was the inevitable taking upon Himself the burden of all the sins of His beloved people.

The disciples were weary. It had been a very busy few days for them. They had just eaten a great meal, it was evening time ... They had been listening to Jesus speaking about how He would be betrayed ... There was so much going on in their minds ... *and they were exhausted* ... Yes, they were exhausted! ... They lay *sleeping* in the Garden of Gethsemane while Jesus stood *weeping*! He *pleaded* and wept before His Father. There was no rest

for Him, there was no solace for Him, and there was no relief for Him. There was none to take His place for He was to be the one and only offering of sacrifice God required for sin to be dealt with.

Yes, the disciples were tired, - they had listened to Jesus speak of the terrible misery and distress that would overwhelm Him, - they didn't know whether to believe Him or not. They didn't altogether understand the extent of what He was saying. And here in the Garden ... He didn't ask much from them ...  
 v.26 Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder ... v.38 tarry ye here, and watch with me ... v.40 What, could ye not watch with me one hour?

Up until that time, Jesus had never been surrounded by so much loneliness. As He looked across the valley, - to the walls of the great city, - He knew the next time He would walk up that hill into Jerusalem ... He would be shackled by Roman chains. He knew He would be taken before the Jewish authorities and falsely tried in their hastily-convened court. He knew that on the Friday morning Pilate, the Roman governor, would condemn Him to death. He knew He would be taken out of the prison cell, made to carry a cross of shame ... and to be crucified on a hill as a common rascal and criminal ... *the Lord Jesus Christ, - the Second Person of the Triune Godhead, The sinless, perfect Son of God, The Lamb offered up as a sacrifice on behalf of the sinner.*

... And in the Garden of Gethsemane, He earnestly pleaded from the depths of His heart for His friends, - His followers, - to sit and tarry, wait and watch with Him. In these verses we find **The Pleading Of The Saviour**.

*Secondly, we also are faced with ...*

### **THE PAIN OF THE SAVIOUR**

He did not have to wait until the crown of thorns pierced His brow. ... He didn't have to experience the agony as the Roman soldiers banged the nails into His hands and into His feet. ... He didn't have to feel the spear going into His side. ... But, you

know, we're thinking about the Garden of Gethsemane; what does Gethsemane mean? ...It simply means a place where they 'pressed' the juice out of the olives. *What a fitting place for the Father to bring His Son!* There He trod the wine-press of the Father's wrath ... all alone!

Yes, I know He took Peter, James and John that little bit further with Him into a specific part of the garden. He had previously said to the other eight, *v.36 Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder* ... similar to Abraham when he instructed the men to remain at the foot of Mount Moriah while he and Isaac went to sacrifice (Gen. 22:5). ... Why, - I wonder, - *did* Jesus take Peter, James and John? ... Probably because these three men had been the witnesses of His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration and now they must be witnesses of His agony.

... And what happened was this ... There, in the darkness, in the midst of the olive trees, in the Garden of Gethsemane the Saviour fell on His face, *alone*. He was too weak to stand, the heavy burden of sin was being laid on His shoulders. He was feeling the pain of dereliction just as if He was hanging on the cross. ... *He knew what was coming!* ... He was being trodden upon in the wine-press.

He knew every twist and turn He must face. He cried out from the Garden in that Valley of Kidron, *O My Father*, - you see, He's there doing His Father's business, He's there because "There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin". And Jesus Christ, *with all His humanity* He pleaded with His Father to remove from Him the cup of suffering, *O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me* (v.39). He wasn't putting on an act. He wasn't pretending. ... Jesus was in greater distress of spirit than anyone could imagine because of the prospects of my sin and your sin being laid upon Him, Ps. 22:14 *I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.*

But look! Jesus knew, even from before the foundation of the world, that the only way the sins of His people could be atoned for was if He hung on that middle tree. *He came to earth knowing it!* ... These were the moments He, - with the Father and the Holy Spirit, - had planned in eternity. And for that reason He was willing to pray ... *not once, but twice* (vv.42,44), *O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.*

Yes, *The Pleading of the Saviour*, and *The Pain of the Saviour*; thirdly ...

**THE PERSISTENCE OF THE SAVIOUR**                      What is happening? Something very definite was happening, and what was it? Jesus said earlier, *Jn. 14:30 the prince of this world cometh*. Satan was on his way! He was on the march! ... The Lord Jesus saw the enemy rallying his forces. He saw them planning and preparing for their great assault. Christ must do battle with the devil and we find the conflict in Gethsemane. It is the ‘close engagement’, it is the ‘battlefield’. It is the serpent preparing to bruise the heel of Christ (Gen. 3:15).

It began the greatest conflict ever fought on earth. The Saviour *was sorrowful and very heavy* (Mt. 26:37) ... heavy with *our* sin. His Father consented to the enemy taking hold of Him ... and He laid upon His Son our iniquities. ... He *knew* what was ahead. He knew all about how they would scourge Him, and spit on Him, and how they would make a cruel crown of sharp, sharp thorns and thrust it upon His head ... and He knew how they would nail Him to the cross.

On each occasion when He returned to His disciples He found them asleep ... and on each occasion He returned to the awful presence of the holy God. He was *exceedingly* sorrowful, - yes, there are degrees of grief, ... and this was more than any man could measure. He needed help when no help was available. He looked to His disciples, and there was no help from them because they were sleeping. He looked to God, and there was no help from God either, for He *pleaded*, v.39 *O My Father* ... v.42 *O My Father* ... Maybe

we are almost too polite to say it, but it sounds to me as if Jesus was *begging!* This was how desperate our sin made our Saviour! Here is *the Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief* (Is. 53:3).

And yet, in all this, He was determined to see out the eternal plan of the Godhead and to take upon Himself our sins because it was the only way by which we would be saved ... He gave His life for He loved us with a perfect and an eternal love. ... There are those who say God chose us in time when He saw what we would come to be ... but I hold with the Reformers and with the greatest divines of our faith who cannot see how that doctrine has any Scriptural merit because if God had not chosen me from before the foundation of the world, He most definitely would never have seen anything in me to justify Him choosing me afterwards. ... And I am also absolutely sure that if He had not chosen me, I would never have been able to have chosen Him!

Yes, even in the garden, the Saviour would not ‘let go’ ... He never thought of running away or calling for an angel to take His place. Jesus Christ had a goal to achieve and neither Judas Iscariot, nor the Jewish leaders, nor the Roman soldiers, nor the whole host of hell would sidetrack Him from His objective of bringing eternal salvation to all who would believe in Him through faith. ... And that is why the Bible can describe Him as “the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world” because He would never be taken from the path that would ultimately lead to Calvary and our redemption.

The doctrine we love, - *the perseverance of the saints*, - is all wholly resting on the even greater doctrine, - **the perseverance of the Saviour!**

**CONCLUSION.**                      **The Pleading of the Saviour, the Pain of the Saviour, and the Perseverance of the Saviour.** ... How does He touch your heart this evening? Are you ready to take of the bread and the cup ... and it

is not formality or empty religious sentimentality or superstition? Instead, it is in memory of the covenant that *binds* you in the grace, mercy and everlasting love of our redeeming God. ... The life of His Son was ripped and torn apart. His blood was freely shed so that His is the victory, and all the glory!

Yes, God predetermined that Gethsemane and Calvary were necessary for our salvation ... He also has another great day in His calendar ... and that is the day when Jesus is coming back for all who love Him and who are waiting for Him. His words to the Church on that day will be the same glorious words He spoke to the disciples on that evening, *Rise, let us be going!* (v.46). ... That is what He will say for that is how John describes it in Rev. 19, **11** *And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.* **12** *His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.* **13** *And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.* **14** *And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. ...* Yes, He will soon be saying to the hosts of Heaven, let us be going!

And also, when Jesus *does* arrive back to this world for His people, *that* will surely be the same command to them ... *Rise, let us be going!* ... I Thess. 4:16 *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

What a wonderful God you and I worship! ... Is there anyone here who does not yet know Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord? ... Come to Him this evening. Cry out to Him to take away your sin and believe in Him to be

saved, Acts 2:21, Rom. 10:13 whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. ...

Paul looked back at the wonders of Calvary, and to what Jesus meant to Him in the present, and he also anticipated the future Glory of being with Him, I Cor. 11:23 the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: 24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.