

First Baptist Church Merritt Island

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Man of Sorrows

Mark 14:32-42

Many of us know but can sometimes fail to remember that the very center of Christianity there is a person. His name is Jesus. Creeds and philosophies only matter in as much as they help us know and see Jesus more clearly and love Him more deeply. Ministry and church life and religious activity only matter in as much as they help us grow in a real and thriving relationship with Jesus. The story of the Bible and the history of this universe exist to reveal the glory of the person of Jesus Christ. It's all about Jesus.

And our text this morning is a text that allows us to see Jesus in stunning clarity. And, by clarity, I don't mean simplicity. Just the opposite. Jesus is filled with mystery and complexity. He's amazing and glorious. And I pray that as we see him in our text, our hearts will be filled with faith and worship and wonder.

So, look with me at the next passage in our study of the Gospel of Mark.

Mark 14:32–42

And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." 33 And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. 34 And he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch." 35 And going a little farther, he 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 for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." 37 And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? 38 Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." 39 And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. 40 And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer him. 41 And he came the third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough; the hour has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42 Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand."

This scene occurs in the middle of the night, just hours before Jesus is crucified. He has brought His disciples to a place called Gethsemane. The word Gethsemane means "olive press." The Gospel of John tells us it was a garden where Jesus often met with His disciples. That's how Judas knew He would be there.

And remember what we saw last week. There were two specific things we highlighted in this section of Mark 14.

1. Every disciple fell away. Throughout this chapter, Mark shows us that every disciple of Jesus fell away. You see that somewhat in the text we just read. Multiple times, Jesus urges His disciples to watch and pray while He is agonizing in prayer. What do they do? They all fall asleep. And in the verses that follow, they all fall away.
2. Jesus did not fall away. Jesus remains perfectly faithful all the way to the very end. In our text, He is in agony to the point of death. He prays for the Father to allow the cup to pass from Him. But He remains faithful through it all. He moves on toward the cross. That's the picture we see of

Jesus in our text, faithfully submitting to the Father's plan in a spirit of prayer in spite of deep agony.

And that gives us our big idea for this morning:

In perfect faithfulness to God the Father, Jesus carried our sorrow and sin with passion and prayer.

Now, let's unpack that big idea a little at a time.

1. The Passion of Jesus

The final moments of the life of Jesus, particularly from the Garden of Gethsemane to His last breath on the cross, are referred to as the passion of Jesus. The word "passion" comes from the Latin verb "patior," which means "to suffer, bear, endure."

So, "the passion of Jesus" is a reference to the pain and suffering He endured. And you see that vividly displayed in our text.

Mark 14:33-35

And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. And he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch." And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.

Now, remember something. Jesus knows He is about to die. That's why He goes to the garden for a time of prayer and fellowship with the Father. But then it seems like something comes over Him, almost by surprise.

Verse 33 says He began to be **greatly distressed**. That phrase translates a Greek word that means "to be moved to an intense emotional state because of something causing great surprise or perplexity."

As Jesus enters the garden to pray, something comes upon Him that is perplexing, even surprising. He's troubled and His soul is sorrowful to the point it nearly kills Him. He falls down on the ground. Luke 22:44 says He was in such agony that His sweat became like drops of blood. In verse 35, He prays for the hour to pass from him. In verse 36, He prays for the Father to remove this cup from Him. I take the hour and the cup to be referring to the same thing. The hour had come for Him to drink from the cup.

So, what's going on here? What's so perplexing and shocking to Jesus that it makes Him fall to the ground in agony and sweat drops of blood? Listen to these words from Isaiah 53 written 700 years before the death of Jesus.

Isaiah 53

1 Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

This reveals the arm of the Lord, or something God has accomplished by His power. Keep that in mind.

3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Jesus was a man of sorrow acquainted with grief. The depth of that is clearly present in Gethsemane.

4 Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

Jesus took **our** griefs and **our** sorrows and **our** affliction. But don't misinterpret this. This isn't merely saying that Jesus entered our sadness and sorrow as though we are the victims of other people's actions or simply living in a world gone wrong. Keep reading.

5 But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

Jesus took on the grief and sorrow that was caused by our own sin. Not something done to us, but something done by us. He took on the worst consequence of our sin –separation from God the Father and the wrath of God as the punishment for our sin.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

10 Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief;

Our sin didn't just fall on Jesus, it was laid on Him by the Father. And the wrath of God fell upon Him because God poured out His wrath on Him.

That's the cup Jesus took on our behalf. The wrath of God. And it was God the Father's doing. The Father treated the Son as though He was a sinner. Now, the fullness of this occurred at the cross, but at the very least, Jesus is getting a foretaste of this in the Garden of Gethsemane. It's so shocking to Him that it sends Him to the ground. He goes to the garden to pray and be in fellowship with God the Father as He prepares for the cross and is shocked as the cup of God's wrath and anger over sin is set before Him.

It wasn't that Jesus didn't know this was going to happen. But even though He expected it, He had never experienced it until He began to experience it here. For eternity past, the Son of God has lived in perfect fellowship with the Father and the Spirit. But, in the passion of Jesus, the Godhead experienced something that God had never experienced before...the Father would treat the Son as though He was a sinner and pour out grief and sorrow and suffering in anger over sin.

That was the deepest suffering of Jesus. Not the lash upon His back or the crown of thorns on His head or the nails in His feet. The deepest suffering Jesus would face wasn't the physical abuse at the hands of men, it was the cup of wrath poured out from the hand of God the Father.

Like Abraham on the mountain with Isaac, the Father presents the sacrifice of His Son and the Father raises the instrument of death in His own hand. And the perfect, holy Son looks to the face of His Father and sees what He has never seen before for all eternity: Anger and Wrath and Condemnation in the eyes of His Father. What you and I deserve in our sin was placed on Jesus.

Behold the love of Jesus. See the agony He bore to provide your forgiveness and redemption from sin. Jesus suffered the wrath of God so that you would never have to if you will trust in Him. The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Oh, the wonder of our Salvation. God the Father treated the Son like a sinner so that sinners could be treated like God's Son.

2 Corinthians 5:21

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The same exchange that placed our sin on Jesus placed Jesus perfect standing on us. If you will trust in Jesus as your Lord and Savior, the Father will treat you as though you are His perfectly obedient Son.

Friends, how dare our hearts grow careless toward Christ? How dare we become casual toward sin? How dare we live in apathy toward the Son of God? In agony, Jesus took on our sin and sorrow so that we could be saved from the wrath of God and received as Sons and Daughters of God Most High.

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive all glory and honor and wisdom and praise. Praise Jesus.

But this text isn't just about the fact that Jesus suffered in our place. This is a text about what Jesus did while He suffered. It's about how He remained faithfully in our place as He walked through the valley of the shadow of death.

So, what did Jesus do? That brings us to the rest of our Big Idea. Jesus didn't just bear our sin and sorrow with passion. He bore it through prayer.

2. The Prayer of Jesus

Mark 14:36

And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

How does Jesus live faithfully through grief and sorrow? He turns His face toward the Father and cries out to Him in prayer.

And, in His prayer, we get a picture of how Jesus desires to live through us as we endure the agony and pain that come from living through the effects of a fallen world. Remember, the work of Jesus isn't merely to give His life for us, it's also to live His life through us. When we trust in Jesus, we are united to the life of Christ in a way that He will raise us up to live the kind of life that only Jesus can live. That's why we said what we said in the baptisms that started this service – Not I, but Christ who lives in me.

And I know I'm in a room full of people who are living through the agony and pain that are the result of a broken and fallen world.

- Some of you have just said your earthly goodbyes to a loved one.
- Some of you have just received devastating news from a doctor.
- Some of you are living in a broken family.
- Some of you are grieving a prodigal child.
- Some of you are seeing the chaos and conflict of a world turned upside down.

So, what do you do? How does Christ in us keep us faithful through the sorrow and pain? He turns His face toward the Father and prays.

Jesus prays in Intimacy with the Father.

36 And he said, “Abba, Father...”

That word “abba” is an Aramaic word that is similar to our word for “daddy.” It’s the most intimate word for a father that a 1st century Jewish person would have known.

Through faith in Jesus, we are adopted into the family of God. The Creator of the Universe is our Heavenly Father. And, because Jesus endured separation from God in our place, He has removed everything that could ever separate us from Him. That means, when we cry out to our Father, He is always attentive to our cry.

When my children were little, there would be times when they were scared or hurt. And, in those moments they instinctively cried out. They would often just say one word: Mom. I’m only half-kidding. But, on the occasions when they called out, “Daddy,” guess what would happen? Daddy would come running.

My kids are nearly grown. It’s been a long time since they were little and needed me to come running. But, to this day, whether I’m in a crowd or at our home, when I hear the voice of one of my kids call out, I come running. They don’t need to say another word. It’s the joy of my heart to come to the help of my kids.

How much more with our Father in Heaven? For all those with heavy hearts, I want to encourage you to step into the life of Jesus today and look toward Heaven and call out, “Abba.”

Jesus prays with Confidence in the Father

36 And he said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for you.

Jesus knows God can do anything that pleases Him. Nothing is too hard for God.

Think about the trial in your life today that is overwhelming to you. Think about the things you need done that you simply cannot do. What would it look like for you to bring those in prayer to the Father believing that nothing is too hard for God?

Friends, all things are possible for our Abba Father. He can heal the sick. He can raise dead parts of us and bring them back to life. He can touch the hearts of our prodigals. He can calm the chaotic seas of life. And Christ in us invites us to pray with confidence that our Father can do all things.

Jesus prays with Petition to the Father

36 And he said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me.

This is one of the great mysteries in our text. What is going on in the heart of Jesus when He asks the Father to remove the cup of wrath from Him? It’s not as if Jesus didn’t know He would suffer and die. A few chapters ago, He told the disciples that He had come to give His life as a ransom for many. Clearly, Jesus isn’t shrinking back from the very reason He had come into the world.

So, what's going on here? Well, I can't explain it. But let me give you a few things to keep in mind. Jesus is God the Son – eternally existent as one with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. As if that isn't mysterious enough, there came a moment in time when God the Son took on the nature of a man – Jesus was born in Bethlehem. He is truly and fully God and truly and fully man. The God-man. In His humanity, there were attributes of His nature as God that were not part of His nature as man. For example, in His human nature, He did not possess the attribute of omnipresence that is part of His nature as God. Another thing He did not possess in His human nature was His complete omniscience as God. For instance, in chapter 13, Jesus said He didn't know the exact time of His return. So, in a mysterious way that I cannot understand, during His life on earth Jesus lived fully within His human nature without ever ceasing to be truly and fully God.

And, in this moment, Jesus is crying out as a perfect man who is fully human. Perhaps He is thinking of Abraham and Isaac when, at the final moment, God the Father provided another way for the sacrifice to be made. There is a mystery here that I don't completely understand.

What we do know is that Jesus didn't hesitate to ask the Father to remove the cup from Him. He brings His honest petition to the Father and asks that it be removed.

The lesson for us: It isn't unfaithful to ask God to remove the agony. So, come to the Father today and ask Him to intervene. Ask Him to work.

Jesus prays with petition to God.

Jesus prays in Submission to the Father

36 And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

Not what I will, but what you will. That's Jesus being perfect in His humanity. That's Jesus doing in this Garden what Adam didn't do in the first Garden. He trusts that the Father knows best and will always and only do what's right. So, He prays "Your will be done."

This is the prayer of faith. The prayer that believes and trusts the Father in all things. And, for many of us, it's the hardest prayer to pray. To open our hands and say, "Father, do what you know is best. Your will, not mine."

What is there in your life today that you want God to remove or to intervene in a very specific way? What would it look like if you laid that thing down before your Abba Father and opened up your hands and let go? That's how the life of Jesus will be expressed in you as you trust in Him.

And, when that happens, let me show you what God does. Mark doesn't include this detail, but we find it in the Gospel of Luke.

Luke 22:43

And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him.

As Jesus yields in submission to the Father, the Father sends an angel to strengthen Him. God provides the strength He needs to live out the Father's will. And you can be confident of that today. Whatever God's desire is for your life, as you yield your life to Him in Christ, He will strengthen you to do whatever He desires.

So, will you trust Him today? Will you believe He knows what is best and depend on Him to give you the strength to live out whatever He desires to do? He may not spare you from the thing that feels like death but remember, resurrection power only comes as we enter the tomb.

Christ in us lives out the life of Christ in us. He doesn't fall away. He remains faithful to the end, even in the face of sorrow and pain.