

Mark 14:32–42 — When Prayer Is More Important Than Sleep

October 4, 2020

Does life have anyone stressed this morning? This past week, did you lay awake at night anxious about the future? For many of us, this pandemic is an incredibly stressful time. Let me share some stress statistics I found this week on the Internet.

Seventy-seven percent of Americans regularly display physical symptoms of stress. These symptoms include rapid heart rate, loss of appetite, chest pain, and body aches. Those tight neck muscles after a tough day of work are a sign of stress. Seventy-three percent of Americans regularly experience psychological signs of stress in their lives. These include anxiety, depression, moodiness, and outbursts of anger. This is when you come home from work, snap at your spouse and kick the dog because you are stressed from work. One in every two people report they can't sleep through the night when they are stressed. What I found interesting is those statistics were compiled before the COVID pandemic.¹ I am sure they have risen dramatically since the pandemic. I began searching the Internet to find how much stress has increased since the pandemic. I ran across an interesting article by a dentist in Iowa.

He claims that he typically treated one cracked tooth a day before COVID. Since COVID, even though he has fewer patients, he is treating two to five cracked teeth a day. The article went on to explain that under stress people grind their teeth when they sleep. They break their teeth when they sleep.² The more

¹ <https://www.stress.org/daily-life>

² <https://www.cnn.com/2020/09/29/health/cracked-teeth-covid-stress-wellness/index.html>

stress in people's lives, the more teeth will break in their mouths. According to that dentist, it appears most people are two to five times more stressed in this pandemic than before the pandemic.

Stress is hard on everyone. It is hard physically and mentally. Unfortunately, there is no way to get rid of stress in a fallen world. Life is always falling apart around us. Life will always be filled with stress.

What does the Bible tell us about how to handle stress? What does the Bible tell us about how we can live lives faithful to Jesus in an extremely stressful world? Those are the questions we are going to answer this morning as we talk about stress and how to handle it well as a Christian. This is a topic all of us need to hear.

As a church, we are studying through the Gospel of Mark. We are in the final week of Jesus' life. We are now in the final hours of his life. Last week in Mark, Jesus celebrated the Lord's Supper with his disciples.

This morning, as we continue our study, Judas left to betray Jesus. Jesus and his disciples have gone on a late night walk that took them just outside of the city walls of Jerusalem to a garden where in a few short hours Jesus would be arrested by hundreds of Roman soldiers, temple guards, and Jewish priests all led by Judas, Jesus' betrayer. There were only a handful of hours until Jesus' arrest and torture began. Can you imagine the stress Jesus faced in those moments? Can you imagine the anxiety he felt? When we wonder if Jesus understands stress, this passage reveals to us nobody experienced more stress

than Jesus. Jesus understands what stress feels like. Turn to Mark 14:32-42.

While you are turning, let me read about Jesus from the book of Isaiah.

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief... Isaiah 53:3 (ESV)

The New Testament never talks about Jesus laughing and being happy. I am not saying Jesus never laughed or wasn't happy. The New Testament simply doesn't talk about that. What the Bible does repeatedly talk about is Jesus' acquaintance with the grief and sadness we face in life. Jesus didn't just see people suffering, he felt their suffering. It often says that when Jesus saw the crowds he was moved with compassion.

When we see people in pain, we empathize with their pain but we can only empathize with it to a certain degree. Jesus was different. He empathized with the pain of others to a much greater degree than we can.

We see this when Jesus went to the home of Mary and Martha after their brother, Lazarus, died. Jesus knew he was going to raise Lazarus from the dead, but he didn't tell Mary and Martha to snap out of their sadness because in five minutes their brother would be back. Instead, Jesus felt their pain. He experienced their pain. In what is the shortest verse of the Bible, it simply says, "Jesus wept" with Mary and Martha over the death of their brother.

But of all the sorrow he experienced as he compassionately felt other people's pain and experienced their pain in ways that are beyond our comprehension, there was no sorrow or stress like he was about to experience in the verses we will study this morning. The stress and anxiety of what was about to happen to him on the cross was so great, the Bible tells us it almost killed

Jesus before he got to the cross. The Bible tells us Jesus was so stressed out in this experience that he cried out with loud cries and tears, wailing in complete agony as he prayed to God the Father to avoid the cross. The Bible also tells us the physical stress Jesus experienced as he faced the stress of his future was so great he began sweating blood. The stress Jesus experienced in the Garden of Gethsemane was on a scale we cannot comprehend. I believe there is not another being in the universe that ever experienced more stress and anxiety about the future than Jesus experienced in Gethsemane in his final hours. Let's see what we can learn about handling stress from this passage.

And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." 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. 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." And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer him. 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. Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand." Mark 14:32–42 (ESV)

We will study these verses under three headings. First, Jesus shows us the right way to handle stress. Second, the disciples show us the wrong way to handle stress. Third, what are the practical lessons the Bible gives us about how to successfully handle stress in our lives?

Jesus shows us the right way to handle stress, trials, and temptations.

The cross was clearly the greatest agony experienced by Jesus. What was the second greatest pain in his life? Some people consider it Jesus' fasting in the wilderness for 40 days without food at the beginning of his ministry. That may be true. I think the second-most painful moment in Jesus' life was the mental anguish he experienced in Gethsemane as he emotionally anticipated the horror and pain of his arrest, torture, and death. I don't think almost starving to death was even close to the pain of the mental stress he experienced. Remember the stress and anxiety Jesus experienced in Gethsemane as he mentally anticipated the cross was so great Jesus almost died.

Let's work our way through the text.

And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." Mark 14:32 (ESV)

Gethsemane means oil press. Tuck that way in your mind for a moment. We will come back to that in a few minutes.

According to the Gospel of John, after leaving the Last Supper, in the middle of the night, Jesus took his disciples into the Kidron Valley where they crossed a brook and began heading up the Mount of Olives. There they went into a garden.

When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. John 18:1 (ESV)



As you can see on this map, Jesus either passed through this garden or visited this garden multiple times on his way to Bethpage and Bethany, which were on top of the Mount of Olives. As we learned

in previous weeks, Jesus taught in Jerusalem during the day and slept outside of town on the Mount of Olives, probably in Bethany, during the night.

And every day he was teaching in the temple, but at night he went out and lodged on the mount called Olivet. And early in the morning all the people came to him in the temple to hear him. Luke 21:37–38 (ESV)



Since Jesus passed this garden all the time, he was very familiar with it. We know this was not a vegetable garden. It was a large olive garden filled with olive trees because Gethsemane means olive oil press. When you name your garden olive oil press, that means you have a lot of trees. That means you have a large olive garden. That means you are a commercial operation because you have a large olive oil press.

We also know this was not the first time Jesus stopped in this olive garden while leaving town and climbing the Mount of Olives with his disciples. Jesus stopped there with his disciples often. It was a place to slow down for a few minutes, a place to get away from the crowds, and a place for Jesus and the disciples to pray.

Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. John 18:2 (ESV)

Jesus was about to enter the olive garden. At the gate, he told eight of his disciples to stop at the entrance. According to Luke 22:40, he gave them instructions on what they were to do while they were waiting for him to return. They were to pray they would not fall into temptation. In the verses before our passage, Jesus warned the disciples all of them would deny him and fall away from him under the stress of that evening. This is why Jesus told them to pray.

The disciples had no idea the size of the storm that was coming when Jesus would be arrested. To face the stress, trials, and temptations that would come their way, they needed to pray for God's strength to make it through the upcoming hours successfully.

This is not the first time Jesus talked to them about the importance of prayer to make it through the trials and temptations in life. Do you remember the Lord's Prayer, which is the model prayer Jesus taught his disciples to pray? Do you remember what Jesus taught his disciples they should always pray for? "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." He told them the only way to successfully face the stress, trials and temptations was through prayer. It was praying that God would lead them away from temptation and deliver them from the traps of the evil one. Jesus taught his disciples to stop trying to rely on their own strength in the trials of life and make sure they turned to God and relied on his strength for the trials of life.

If Jesus told his disciples that the only way they could successfully make it through the stresses and trials of life was by prayer, that is also true for us. The only way we can successfully make it through the stresses, trials, and temptations in life is by prayer.

The story continues.

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." Mark 14:33–34 (ESV)

Why did Jesus take Peter, James, and John with him further into the garden? First, these guys were the leaders. They were close to Jesus and more intimate with Jesus than the other disciples. Second, they were arrogant and

overconfident in their abilities. Jesus was giving them this experience to cut them down to size and help them realize they were no better than the other disciples. They were complete failures, just like the rest of the disciples, but Jesus still loved them and died for them.

Let me show you their pride and their arrogant attitudes that left them feeling like they were better than others. You may remember in Mark 10:38-39, James and John came with their mother and asked to sit at Jesus' left and right hand when he came into his kingdom. Jesus said, "Do you think you can drink the cup I am to drink?" In other words, "Do you think you can successfully face the kind of agony I am about ready to endure?" What did they say? "No problem Jesus! Bring it on!" In this passage they learned they could not endure the kind of agony Jesus was about to face. They couldn't even stay awake and pray with Jesus.

Peter was also overconfident. A few verses before this, in Mark 14:31, when Jesus told the disciples they would all deny him before morning, Peter boldly proclaimed he would not deny Jesus. He was ready to die with Jesus. This was Peter, James, and John's big chance to shine and show their faithfulness to Jesus. Instead of being faithful to Jesus and accomplishing the simple task of praying for an hour, they went to sleep right in front of Jesus. They proved they were no better than others. They were no different than the others. Like others, they were miserable failures but Jesus still loved them anyway and died for them even after they failed him.

As Jesus went deeper into the garden, Mark tells us Jesus began to be greatly distressed and troubled. This phrase "deeply distressed" occurs only in the Bible here in Mark. It means to become intensely emotional. Jesus was emotionally overwhelmed as he anticipated the cross. Jesus was so emotionally overwhelmed that he began to lose it. He was deeply distressed. The book of Hebrew tells us Jesus began to wail, and wail as he had an emotional breakdown because of the stress he was experiencing as he anticipated the cross, which was only hours away. Remember what Mark said about this stress. Jesus was so stressed, it was enough to physically kill him even before he went to the cross.

The other gospels tell us more about the way things unfolded in the garden.

And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed... Luke 22:41 (ESV)

Jesus took Peter, James, and John into the depths of the garden then left them behind so they could pray; then he went a little deeper into the garden so he could pray. Jesus did not go far away from them, only a stone's throw away from them. It is important for us to remember that Jesus' emotional breakdown, and his crying, wailing prayers only took place feet away from Peter, James, and John. They witnessed everything.

And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. Mark 14:35 (ESV)

Mark, in his characteristically terse style, only tells us Jesus went a little farther into the garden away from Peter, James, and John, just a stone's throw away. Then Mark tells us Jesus dropped to the ground, apparently too weak from the stress of the moment to stand as he prayed.

And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. Luke 22:44 (ESV)

What was Jesus' prayer like? It was filled with emotion, tears, and crying. He was literally in emotional and psychological agony he was so stressed out. He was so stressed, he was sweating blood. Not little drops of blood that glistened but great big drops of blood that were dripping off his nose and down his body. There is a medical name for this. It is hematidrosis. When people are under extreme stress and anxiety, the capillaries in their skin explode. They sweat blood. It says Jesus was not sweating a little bit of blood but great drops of blood were coming out of Jesus' skin. This is literally the maximum amount of stress a human being can stand. Mark tells us Jesus was so stressed, he was at the edge of dying before the cross because of the stress and anxiety in his life as he anticipated the cross.

And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. Luke 22:43 (ESV)

When Jesus needed angelic help to make it through stress so he did not die, you know he was seriously stressed out.

When you find yourself filled with stress about the future, and you wonder if Jesus understands stress, here is your answer. Jesus has experienced more stress than anyone on the planet. Jesus was so stressed about the cross he sweat blood.

What was it that Jesus found so stressful? Would it be the disciples' betrayal? Was it the pain of the crucifixion — it is one of the most exquisite tortures invented by man? No. All the torture of the next hours was not that stressful.

What was it that stressed Jesus out? It was becoming sin and experiencing the wrath of God. Remember Jesus was holy and pure. Jesus had never known sin. On the cross, like a sponge he would soak up all our sin and become sin for us so he could die for us. The one who knew no sin would become the most horrid, wretched, sinful, disgusting being in the universe as he bore our sin. Then Jesus would experience, concentrated in time, the eternity of God the Father's wrath that we deserve to experience for all of time. That is what stressed Jesus out. It was moving from being the one who had never known sin to becoming the one who would soak up all of our sin, then becoming the one to bear all of God's just wrath for sin that we deserve. It that doesn't stress you out, I don't know what would.

Another good question is, "If Jesus is God, why did he struggle to embrace this part of his mission?" Why was Jesus stressed about this if he is God? Can't God do anything? Why would God be stressed about anything? The Bible is clear that Jesus is fully God, but he is also fully man. We often focus on Jesus' divine nature and forget that he also had a human nature. While Jesus knew God the Father's will was for him to die for our sin, as a human being, he didn't want to die. In fact everything inside of him as a human being fought the idea of dying. There was a battle between Jesus' divine nature that knew he must die and his human nature, and as a human being nobody wants to die.

Think of it this way. Hold your breath until you die. How well does that work? Not well because everything inside of you instinctively wants to live. Imagine if it was not just an ordinary death you were facing but one of the most

painful deaths known to man, plus, you would absorb sin and then suffer all the wrath we deserve for our sin. Isn't it obvious why Jesus did not want to die even though he knew it was God the Father's will for him to die for our sin?

How did Jesus solve the battle he was facing? It was a battle of his human will, which wanted to live, and his divine will, which knew he must die for us if we are to live. The way Jesus solved this incredible stress is amazingly simple. He prayed! Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane would be what God used to shape his will into embracing the cross instead of resisting the cross.

Even though Jesus prayed for hours that night, Mark only records the essence of Jesus' prayer. These are the cliff notes.

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." Mark 14:36 (ESV)

Was it possible for God the Father to save Jesus from the cross? Yes, it was. But if God the Father saved Jesus from the cross, we would be in the lake of fire forever. There would be no forgiveness of sin because Jesus was the only one capable of paying for our sin.

I love the way Jesus prayed. This is very instructive for us. He honestly expressed his desires to God the Father, but he also submitted his desires to God's will for his life. Jesus said, "If possible, take this cup from me, yet not my will but your will be done."

Isn't this the pattern we are to follow in prayer? We are to tell God our will for something in this life but at the same time tell God the Father that we submit our desires for our lives to God's desires for our lives. More important than getting what we want in our lives is following God the Father's will for our lives.

Realize our will for our lives is usually to avoid suffering and pain. Many times God's will for our lives will mean embracing suffering and pain. If God the Father's will for Jesus involved suffering and pain as he died for our sin, why should we expect God's will for our lives will never involve times of difficulty? We should expect that God's will for our lives will sometimes involve difficulty, sacrifice, pain, and hardship.

For example, if you are a high school student, there will come a time when your friends choose to do something stupid. They will offer you a beer to drink, ask you to join them in looking at something inappropriate on the Internet, or offer you drugs and ask you to join them. Saying no is the right thing to do, but it is also the costly thing to do. Your friends will laugh at you. They will pick on you. They will ignore you. You will be lonely. Expect that will happen. God's will for our lives usually involves embracing suffering and pain, just like that was God's will for Jesus' life, not avoiding suffering and pain.

Let's keep looking at Jesus' prayer. Prayer for Jesus wasn't just about Jesus finding the strength to make it through the stress and pain of the cross. Prayer was the way God shaped the desires of Jesus' heart to be God the Father's desires for his life.

Prayer is not just a time for us to tell God our requests but prayer is the time when God shapes the will of our lives to be in sync with his will for our lives. We often think that prayer is just us talking to God. That is not true. Prayer is much more. Prayer is when God works in us and shapes the will of our lives to be in line with the desires God has for our lives.

Think about this. How many times have you gone to pray and in prayer God starts to make clear what you should do? That is God using prayer as a time when he presses his will into our will.

Have you ever gone to prayer and found God surfacing a sin you need to confess? That is God pressing his will into your will during prayer. Have you ever been in a difficult spot with your spouse, gone to pray, and during that time in prayer God starts changes your heart? He shows you your lack of love. He reminds you of the way you need to forgive your spouse like Jesus has forgiven you. You get off your knees in prayer with a renewed energy to love your spouse the way Jesus loves you. Prayer is the way God presses his will into our will and forms our will into his will for our lives, even it if is difficult.

I don't know but I wonder what would have happened if Jesus had not taken these hours in prayer in Gethsemane. The hours of honest crying, sweating blood, and calling out to his father were the time God the Father shaped Jesus' human will from resisting the cross to embracing the cross to save us from our sin. I often wonder what would have happened to Jesus if he tried to embrace the cross without this night in prayer.

If Jesus needed to pray to handle the stress in his life successfully, we need nights in prayer and time in prayer to handle the stress in our lives successfully. God may change our circumstances in response to our prayers, but more often God will not change our circumstances and instead he will change us. He will shape our will for our lives into his will for our lives so we desire to please God and obey him, even when the choices are hard.

Remember this: When we pray, many times God will not change our circumstances. He will change us to enable us to follow Jesus in tough circumstances. If we don't pray for God's strength and take time in prayer to submit our will for our lives to God's will for our lives, we will fail miserably when stress and hard times come our way, just like the disciples did.

The disciples show us the wrong way to handle stress, trials, and temptation.

And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Mark 14:37–38 (ESV)

Jesus was only a stone's throw away from Peter, James, and John. Jesus was praying with loud cries for an hour, begging for God the Father to take away the cross. He was collapsed on the ground. He was an emotional basket case. Peter, James, and John could see Jesus under the moonlight. They could hear Jesus in pain. What did they do? They took a nap!

In some ways, we can understand why they were asleep. It was after their bed time. They were tired. Last week, we learned they ate a lot of food at the Passover. They stuffed themselves full of lamb. They had a food coma. Great fatigue was understandable, but remember what was happening right in front of them to the one person they loved. Jesus was weeping. He was on his face crying. He was in agony calling out to God the Father in prayer. They ignored him and slept right in front of him.

Some of you are wondering how I know Jesus cried out with a loud voice with in Gethsemane as he prayed. That is found not in the Gospels but in the book of Hebrews.

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Hebrews 5:7 (ESV)

Hebrews says Jesus was wailing. He was covered in blood from his sweat. This was the Jesus the disciples promised to die for. He was in agony in front of them and instead of praying with him, they took a nap!

I don't care how sleepy you are, if someone you love is in excruciating pain right in front of you, don't you think you would be shocked into alertness?

This shows us the fickleness of the disciples and the depth of their failure. At one moment, they claimed they would die with Jesus. Hours later they were sleeping instead of praying with Jesus. I know what you are thinking. "I wouldn't have fallen asleep. I wouldn't have failed Jesus. I would have prayed just like Jesus told me to."

No, we wouldn't have. We would have probably failed Jesus, just like the disciples did. This is one thing I love about this Gospel. In the Gospel of Mark, Mark constantly pictures the disciples as complete failures. They were not super-spiritual people. They were ordinary people, like you and me. Although they failed Jesus miserably, Jesus still loved them and died for them. The same is true for us. Even though we fail Jesus miserably, he still loves us and died for us. One moment, we claim to be committed to Christ. The next moment we are asleep and not keeping our promise to Christ. Amazingly, Jesus still loves us and will never fail us.

What I find amazing about this is how incredibly compassionate Jesus was to his disciples that were complete failures. Jesus was facing incredible stress. He was sweating blood. He was crying in mental pain and anguish. Jesus

had huge issues in his own life to worry about, but Jesus didn't just care about himself. He stopped his prayer three times so he could encourage his disciples to stop sleeping and start praying with him. Jesus is such a great high priest. He is so sympathetic and compassionate. If I was Jesus, I would have said, "I have enough problems in my life worry about my disciples who think sleep is more important than prayer." I would have probably said, "If they haven't learned to listen to what I say about the importance of prayer, they can suffer the consequences." That wasn't Jesus. He was so compassionate. Three times he stopped his prayer time to shake and wake Peter, James, and John.

Jesus told them what they needed to do. Watch and pray that they may not enter into temptation. Watch in the Greek literally means "stay awake." Every time you see "watch," simply read, "Stay awake." They were to stay awake and pray so they would not fall to temptation and sin. Just as Jesus needed to stay awake and pray so he would not fail the temptation of the cross, they needed to stay away and pray so they would not fall into sin during the trial of Jesus' arrest and the cross that would follow.

When we face temptation, the way we beat that temptation is through prayer — consistent prayer, heartfelt prayer. We ask God to change our will for our lives to be in line with God the Father's will for our lives.

I ask you, in our busy world, how much time have you taken to pray this week? When was the last time you prayed telling God your will for your life but also telling God the Father it is more important to you that you embrace his will for your life, even if it involves suffering and pain?

Jesus said to them, “The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” In other words, “I know you want to please God in your hearts but you are tired.” Did Jesus say, “Since you are tired, skip prayer, get your rest, and face tomorrow refreshed with a smile?” Absolutely not! Folks, there are times in life when prayer is more important than sleep. There are times when prayer is more needed than sleep and even though we are tired, we need to stay awake and pray, asking God to shape our will to be his will. Peter should have prayed while doing jumping jacks! That would have been a good idea.

How do we stay awake when we know we need to pray but it is so easy to sleep? How do we pray when we know we need to stay focused but it is so easy to drift? Here are a few tips. I like to go for prayer walks. I get easily distracted so I like to walk and pray. That keeps me awake. I usually bring my phone with me so I can write down whatever God brings to mind as I walk and pray. I also spend time writing my prayers in a journal. Writing helps me to put form to my thoughts and to express my thoughts. Writing helps me stay focused and on track. Another way I try to pray instead of sleep is I speak my prayers out loud rather than mumble them in my heart. It is hard to sleep when we are speaking.

And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer him. Mark 14:39–40 (ESV)

Jesus was covered in blood, sweat, and tears after crying in agony. He came to them and told them to wake up and start praying. He went back to his praying and what did they do? They went back to their sleeping! To Jesus, it didn't matter that their eyes were heavy. It didn't matter the lateness of the hour. What mattered was the importance of prayer to prepare them for the stress and

trial of his arrest that they were about to face. That was the only way they could face the trials of life successfully.

I like the way Mark says this, “They did not know how to answer him.”

Mark emphasizes their shame and embarrassment.

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. Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.” Mark 14:41–42 (ESV)

Jesus prayed for another hour of blood, sweat, tears, and loud cries.

Peter, James, and John went back to sleep, even though they were only feet away from Jesus.

Finally, Jesus said, “It is enough; the hour has come.”

Mark tells us at that point Jesus could see Judas approaching in the distance at the bottom of the Mount of Olives. Rather than running from his arrest, which was the way the will of Jesus’ heart began that night, Jesus led the way to his arrest. God the Father’s will for his life had been indelibly stamped into his human will for his life. Jesus’ heart embraced God the Father’s will that he would die for our sin, even though it was extremely painful.

That night, prayer was more important than sleep. Prayer is the way Jesus’ will for his life was brought to embrace God the Father’s will for his life. In the same way, prayer is the only way our desire for our lives will become God the Father’s desire for our lives, especially when it is hard and involves sacrifice.

What are the practical lessons?

All of us will struggle between our will for our lives and seeking God’s will for our lives. Jesus faced this. Everyone will face this. Our will for our lives is always to

be a success. It is always that life will be easy. It is always that we will be rich and famous. It is always that we will be healthy, not sick. That may not be God's will for our lives. God's will for our life may involve being faithful to a spouse in a difficult marriage. It may involve being lonely because we can't find godly friends. It was God the Father's will for Jesus that he would die on the cross and become sin for us. If God the Father's will for Jesus' life involved facing times of suffering, what makes us think God the Father's will for our lives will never involve times of suffering and sacrifice?

1. **When we pray, we should tell God what we want in life, but more important is surrendering ourselves to God's will for our lives.** We learned this from Jesus. Jesus' human will was to avoid the cross. It was horrifying to become sin. More important to Jesus than what he wanted in life was what God the Father desired for his life, and that involved suffering. Through prayer Jesus came to peace with his Father's plan for his life. We need to tell God the desires we have for our lives but we also need to tell God the Father that more important to us is submitting our plans to his plan for our lives. That is the way we should pray.
2. **Prayer is the only way to successfully face the stress, trials, and temptations of life.** This is what we saw with the disciples. Jesus told them they needed to pray to successfully handle the trials they would face after Jesus was arrested. Prayer is the way God strengthens us to face the temptations and trials of life. Sometimes, like the disciples on the night of Jesus' arrest, we don't have a warning that life is about to fall apart around us.

We need to be in prayer ahead of time so we are ready when we don't see it coming.

3. **There are times when prayer is more important than sleep.** It is easy to think of prayer as an optional thing. Especially when life is stressful, prayer is an essential thing.

Application

How is your prayer life? For most of us, it is hard to find a few minutes to pray. As we saw this morning, prayer is essential part of the Christian life, not an optional part of our lives. It is the only way we can successfully face the stresses, trials, and temptations that will come our way.

This week, here are three ways to put prayer into practice.

1. Give up sleep in order to make time for prayer. Prayer doesn't just happen. We need to fight to make time for prayer. There are times when prayer is more important than sleep.
2. Find a way to stay focused in prayer instead of drifting to sleep in prayer. Try taking a prayer walk, journaling your prayers, or speaking to God out loud in prayer.
3. Find a group that will pray with you, such as a Life Group. Being part of a group that prays together will help us find the discipline, time and focus we desire for the time in prayer we so desperately need.



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