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**Jesus Prays at Gethsemane**

**Matthew 26:36-56**

Mathew 26:36-46 *Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here, while I go over there and pray.” And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.” And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.” And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, “So, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.” And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.”*

Here is the theological connection from Gethsemane to Golgotha: in Gethsemane what Jesus fears more than anything is the silence of God and separation from God his Father.

Why is Jesus so sorrowful and troubled? Why is he on his face? Why is he crying out for hours? Why is the One who came into the world to die so fearful of his death? The colossal burden that “bowed down the heart of Jesus was the weight of the sin of the world.”

The Lord deliberately chose Gethsemane. John’s Gospel mentions it as a “garden” suggests that the apostle has in mind a deliberate comparison with the original Garden of Eden. The symbolism is this:

• The first Adam began life in a garden. Christ, the second Adam, began

 the end of his life in a garden.

• In Eden Adam sinned. In Gethsemane the Savior overcame sin.

• In Eden Adam fell. In Gethsemane Jesus conquered.

• In Eden Adam hid himself. In Gethsemane our Lord boldly presented

 himself.

• In Eden a sword was drawn. In Gethsemane the sword was put away.

This symbolism is not accidental or incidental to Jesus’ death. It was an assurance for future generations of believers that God in Christ is sovereign.

But what does that mean?

God is in control. There is absolutely nothing that happens in the universe that is outside of God’s influence and authority. As King of kings and Lord of lords, God has no limitations, nor has He any competition:

God is above all things and before all things. He is the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end. He is not a created being. He is immortal, and He is present everywhere so that everyone can know Him

God created all things and holds all things together, both in heaven and on earth, both visible and invisible

God knows all things past, present, and future. There is no limit to His knowledge, for God knows everything completely before it even happens.

God can do all things and accomplish all things. Nothing is too difficult for Him, and He orchestrates and determines everything that is going to happen in your life, in my life, in America, and throughout the world.

God is in control of all things and rules over all things. He has power and authority over nature, earthly kings, history, angels, demons, and Satan himself

That’s what being sovereign means. It means being the ultimate source of all power and authority, over everything that exists. Only God can make that claim.

Why then did Jesus pray, asking God the Father to change his plans?

In John’s Gospel, he mentions that “Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley.” A drain ran from the temple altar down to the Kidron ravine to drain away the blood of sacrifices. At this time of year, the Passover, more than 200,000 lambs were slain. So when Jesus and his followers crossed the Kidron, it was red with the blood of sacrifice. Jesus knew he would be that once and for all sacrifice.

A sacrifice was for atonement, to make amends, to provide restitution, to pay for sin

“Atonement” – is the work Christ did in his life and death to earn our salvation

**The Cause for the Atonement: 2 primary aspects of God’s character**

The love of God

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life*

The justice of God

Romans 3:23-26 *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

**The Necessity of the Atonement:**

God didn’t have to save anyone. He did not spare (excuse) Satan and the fallen angels.

2 Peter 2:4 *for if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment*

God had forgiven sins since the beginning of time…but no penalty for those sins had been paid…therefore God had not fully exercised His justice.

But He is sovereign, and he chose to save some of mankind to display his love. For that then to happen, there had to be a payment, a price paid for the sin that separated God from mankind, so that God’s justice would also be displayed.

But the love of God and the justice of God also required that God have a way for the penalty due to us for our sin to be paid. This is the grace of God.

God’s plan made Christ’s death necessary

Luke 24:25-27 *And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*

The atonement required a human sacrifice (like for like; man for mankind)

Hebrews 2:17 *Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.*

The atonement required a perfect sacrifice (God for mankind)

Hebrews 9:25-26 *Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his won, for them he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

But what made Jesus the “perfect” sacrifice?

**The Nature of the Atonement:**

Jesus was sinless in our place

Romans 5:15 *But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man’s trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.*

But if it was just about Jesus not ever doing anything bad, then God could have killed him as an infant, instead of at age 33!

Being sinless also required obedience to the Father’s will.

He needed a track record of faithful obedience, tested and proven over time.

Get this: The nature of the atonement was a transaction primarily between God the Father and Jesus the Son.

We are the secondary recipients of the lasting results of the atonement.

And for the atonement to be accomplished, Jesus had to suffer

He suffered in life, throughout his lifetime

Isaiah 53:3 *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.*

 - Limited by being a human

 - Tempted in every way by the Devil in the desert

 - Constantly being attacked by the religious leaders

 - Lost his earthly father, Joseph and his friend, Lazarus

 - Rejected by so many of those he came to save

Jesus also suffered in his death

 - Physical pain of torture and crucifixion

 - Suffered the pain of bearing our sin

 Isaiah 53:6 *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*

 Adams’s sin was imputed to us (liability and punishment)

 Our sins were imputed to Christ (liability and punishment)

 - Abandonment by the Father because of the presence of our sin on Him

 Matthew 27:46b *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*

It was because God the Father has no compatibility with sin

 Habakkuk 1:13a *you who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot*

 *look at wrong*

 Jesus the Son lost the Father’s presence on the cross, so that now The

Father patiently stays near to us even when we don’t deserve it.

- And Jesus suffered because he had to bear the wrath of God, the

Father’s anger against all sin; our sin.

That word “propitiation” we saw earlier in Hebrews 2 means to “bear and completely satisfy God’s wrath towards sin, and in so doing change God’s wrath toward us to favor.”

Christ was the propitiation, so God the Father could be “propitious” toward us.

And Jesus did this for us! He was our “penal substitute”

 “Penal,” meaning penalty for sin (un-holiness, incompatibility with God)

 “Substitute,” meaning he substituted for us

If Jesus hadn’t done this, where would it leave us? Here is the gospel:

1. We deserve to die as the penalty for our sins
2. We deserve to bear the wrath God has toward our sins
3. We are separated from God because of our sins
4. We are in bondage to sin and to the kingdom of Satan

But because Jesus did go to the cross for us:

1. The sacrifice has been made – we don’t have to fear death and dying
2. The propitiation has been accomplished – God isn’t angry with us
3. The reconciliation with God has been connected – we have relationship
4. The redemption (the ransom) has been paid – we’re no longer enslaved

If Christ bore all God’s wrath, then can any hardships or sufferings you experience in life be due to God’s anger against you? (No!)

If not, then why do we as Christians experience difficulties and suffering and loss in this life?

Hebrews 12:11 *For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*

Strange as it seems, we go through hard times because God the Father loves us

 He wants us, His redeemed children, to show the evidence of the

 righteousness He has accomplished for us in Jesus

Hear this, believe this, for this is a gospel statement:

1 Peter 2:21-25 *For to this you have been called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*

Each week we go to the Communion Table, saying to God the Father that because of Jesus’ willingness to be our substitute we want to die to sin and live to righteousness.

If that is your heart’s intention; if you have willingly submitted yourself to the love of God, the justice of God paid by Jesus, and the grace of God, we invite you to come to the Table…