



Willing

Jesus willingly submitted to the Father's redemptive plan.

LUKE 22:41-53

Life can be hard, even when we are doing what we are supposed to be doing. Job pressures, health issues, and dealing with family relationships can make life a challenge. Even representing Christ in this world can be a challenge when we are moved out of our comfort zones. In each of these situations we are called on to trust God, knowing He has a plan. In today's lesson we see Jesus express trust in the Father while carrying out God's redemptive plan.

What situations challenge your willingness to trust God?

UNDERSTAND THE **CONTEXT**

LUKE 22:39-53

The events following the Lord's Supper seem to speed up as the providential plans of God are set in motion to move Him toward the cross. Jesus led the disciples to a familiar place to pray and to prepare for what He would face. Luke provides the most concise account of Jesus' prayer and arrest. The Gospels of Matthew and Mark locate these happenings in the garden of Gethsemane, which was located on the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives. The word *Gethsemane* means "oil press," which is noteworthy since in this place Jesus would be pressed emotionally while anticipating the suffering He would endure.

If we read Luke 22:41-53 alongside the other Gospel accounts, the intensity of this moment is increased all the more. Mark reports that Jesus was distressed, Matthew highlights His sorrow, and both reveal He was deeply troubled. Jesus even told the disciples that He was sorrowful even to the point of death (Matt. 26:38).

Through all of this, Jesus ultimately and willingly submitted to the Father's redemptive plan. In several places in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus provided the disciples instructions on how to pray (11:1-13; 18:1-8). In this week's session, we witness Jesus' model prayer in a very powerful way. While making His requests to God, He ultimately submitted Himself to the Father's will. Thus, Jesus exemplified how He instructed the disciples to pray, "your will be done" (Matt. 6:10). In this account, Jesus asked the Father for the strength to face His death, which would institute the new covenant by His blood (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25). This is the covenant He discussed with the disciples at the last supper.

Read Luke 22:41-53, noting the emotions expressed by Jesus. How do these emotions point to Jesus' trust in the Father regardless of what Jesus faced?

EXPLORE THE TEXT

IN PRAYER (LUKE 22:41-46)

⁴¹ Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and began to pray, ⁴² "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me—nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done."

⁴³ Then an angel from heaven appeared to him, strengthening him. ⁴⁴ Being in anguish, he prayed more fervently, and his sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground. ⁴⁵ When he got up from prayer and came to the disciples, he found them sleeping, exhausted from their grief. ⁴⁶ "Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up and pray, so that you won't fall into temptation."

VERSES 41-42

Luke began this account with Jesus' leading His disciples to the Mount of Olives (v. 39). The other Gospel writers specify the location as Gethsemane, a garden in the Kidron Valley (Matt. 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42). This event immediately followed the Last Supper, and Luke noted that they went as usual to this place for retreat (Luke 22:39). Mentioning that Jesus led His disciples to this place underscores the discipleship pattern of following Him in the spiritual disciplines. In this passage Jesus taught the disciples how to pray under the weight of severe testing, which He warned that all disciples would encounter (22:31;35-36).

Furthermore, in this intense time of prayer Jesus instructed believers to align themselves with God's will. In Luke 22:40, Jesus instructed His disciples to pray lest they enter into temptation, which is the last petition of the Lord's prayer (11:4). A similar command is given in 21:36, where Jesus commanded His disciples to keep alert in prayer so that they may be strong enough to flee the things that were about to take place. We know from the narrative that Jesus' cup of substitutionary suffering would not be removed. Jesus would drink this cup. He would die. But, death would not have the last word.

Jesus *withdrew* or "pulled away" from the others. In one sense, His withdrawal communicated the emotional weight of the situation. Jesus was by Himself and was alone. Luke not only recorded the distance, but also Jesus' posture in prayer—Jesus *knelt down*.

Kneeling is an act of humility and is different from the ancient Jewish custom of standing during prayer (compare with the Pharisee in Luke 18:11).

At this point, the focus becomes Jesus' mood as He prayed. At the beginning of His prayer, He prefaced His requests with the words ***Father, if you are willing***. This reveals that the events that were about to take place were part of God's plan. Jesus did not concern Himself with possibilities but with submitting to the will of the Father. Could there be any other way? The word translated ***nevertheless*** demonstrates that God's will must come to pass and Jesus was willingly submitting Himself to this course of events (12:49-50; 13:31-33; 18:31).

KEY DOCTRINE: *God*

To God we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience (Deut. 6:4-5).

Jesus prayed, ***take this cup away from me***. In the Old Testament, the "cup of wrath" is a common metaphor (Pss. 60:3; 75:8; Isa. 29:9-10; 51:17-23; Jer. 25:15-29). While Jesus made the desire of His heart known to God, His primary concern was to do the Father's will. This is an important lesson for all believers. We must admit that prayer does not make our will known to God (He knows before we even ask), but prayer often makes God's will known to us. Those who submit themselves to God in prayer open themselves up to being used by God, even in suffering. Jesus' request is less significant than His desire to do God's will.

How does Jesus' prayer in the garden reflect how Jesus taught others to pray in Matthew 6:9-13?

VERSES 43-46

At this point in the narrative, ***an angel from heaven*** attended to Jesus to strengthen Him for what was ahead. An angelic manifestation following prayer had also happened during Jesus' temptation in the wilderness (Matt. 4:11). In both of these cases, the angel's appearance strengthened Jesus for His mission to seek and save the lost.

The angel ministered to Jesus in a time of anguish so intense that His ***sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground***. The descriptive terms Luke used to describe Jesus' fervent prayer and emotional anguish highlight the intensity of this moment. This is a picture of tension and readiness for the battle ahead. Jesus rose from prayer ready to accomplish the task set before Him.

While Jesus was being strengthened in prayer, the disciples were ***sleeping***. Undoubtedly, it had been a long day and the emotional weight had tired them. But faithfulness requires intentional diligence. While Jesus prepared for battle, the disciples shrank back in weakness. Jesus was prepared for what lay ahead; the disciples were not. This emphasizes the nature of Jesus' battle against the forces of sin and death that no other person can face with confidence. Jesus did what we cannot do for ourselves. He then awakened the fear-paralyzed sleeping disciples, asked why they were sleeping, and warned them to ***pray*** so that they wouldn't ***fall into temptation***.

**How did Jesus' daily prayer practice prepare Him to pray at this moment?
How does a person's past practices impact present disciplines?**

IN BETRAYAL (LUKE 22:47-50)

⁴⁷ While he was still speaking, suddenly a mob came, and one of the Twelve named Judas was leading them. He came near Jesus to kiss him, ⁴⁸ but Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" ⁴⁹ When those around him saw what was going to happen, they asked, "Lord, should we strike with the sword?" ⁵⁰ Then one of them struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear.

VERSES 47-48

While Jesus was *still speaking* to the disciples, **Judas** and the mob showed up to begin the sequence of events that ultimately led to the very battle for which Jesus was preparing. Judas stepped out of the shadows as the one who would betray Jesus. Even though Judas acted as money carrier for the disciples, he was known as a scrooge and a thief (John 12:5-6). Remember, Judas was present at the Last Supper, during which Jesus predicted His betrayal (Luke 22:21). The price of the betrayal was thirty pieces of silver. The money handler handed Jesus over for money.

Judas had planned to identify Jesus with a **kiss** (Matt. 26:48). Typically in Scripture, a kiss was a friendly gesture of greeting or departure (Luke 7:45). But here, it was an enemy's gesture of betrayal. It would have been dark that night, and Judas wanted to make sure the arrestors knew who exactly who Jesus was. Remember, Judas would have known where Jesus would be at night, as praying in this location was His custom (22:39). This knowledge of Jesus' daily pattern, and the note that Judas was **one of the Twelve**, only heightens the horror of this moment. His intent on sealing it with a kiss makes it all the more bitter.

As Judas approached Jesus, the Savior asked, **“Judas, are you betraying the •Son of Man with a kiss?”** The term “Son of Man” is used over eighty times in the Gospel accounts. This designation is often equated with the title *Messiah*, and is used in Daniel (7:13) in reference to an apocalyptic figure from heaven that establishes an eternal kingdom and exercises dominion over all people. Judas was betraying the Messiah, the One from heaven who would soon establish His eternal kingdom and rule over all.

VERSES 49-50

As Judas and the mob approached Jesus, the disciples were provoked to a defensive stance. They asked with a tone of affirmation, **“Lord, should we strike with the sword?”** They didn't wait for an answer; they took action. Luke doesn't tell us who, but **one of them struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear**. It was not uncommon to carry weapons. In fact, Jesus had just made a statement about swords (v. 38). The disciples were on alert, ready to guard and defend Jesus.

What do the contrasting reactions of Jesus and His disciples reveal about their trust in God at that moment?

How does a person's reaction in a challenging time reveal the object of their trust?

IN ACTION (LUKE 22:51-53)

⁵¹ But Jesus responded, “No more of this!” And touching his ear, he healed him. ⁵² Then Jesus said to the chief priests, temple police, and the elders who had come for him, “Have you come out with swords and clubs as if I were a criminal? ⁵³ Every day while I was with you in the temple, you never laid a hand on me. But this is your hour—and the dominion of darkness.”

VERSE 51

After the strike to the high priest's servant, Jesus rebuked the disciples by saying, “***No more of this!***” He did not want or need His disciples to defend Him with physical force. More importantly, He did not want to hinder what must take place.

Jesus then ***healed*** the servant's ***ear***. This may be somewhat surprising unless the reader takes into account Jesus' ministry in total, which often included healing. The healing of the man's ear was a sign of compassion toward those who had come to take Him prisoner. In the Gospel accounts, Jesus' healings demonstrated His power to reverse the effects of sin and to overcome the power of evil. The disciples were ready to kill someone for whom Jesus was ready to give His life.

How did the healing of the servant's ear demonstrate Jesus' willingness to follow the Father's plan?

VERSES 52-53

Luke identified Jesus' capturers that came under the cloak of darkness as **the chief priests, temple police, and the elders**. In sum, the religious, military, and political leaders had gathered together to arrest Jesus. The powers of the world came to take on the Son of Man.

Jesus rebuked them for treating Him as though He were a **criminal**. Why did they need so many authorities? Why did they need weapons? Note how Jesus also said, **this is your hour**. In doing so, Jesus aligned their actions with the evil one and his **dominion of darkness**. Darkness would have its brief hour, but the light of the resurrection will shine for all of eternity. In this brief but tragic moment, God allowed the forces of evil to accomplish their will. Ultimately, however, what they meant for evil God meant for ultimate good. This whole account reads somberly, like the dark night it was. But this darkness would pass.

How does submitting to God's will, even in the face of rejection, provide confidence and comfort?

BIBLE SKILL: Use a Bible concordance

Use a Bible concordance to identify passages that reference powers of darkness. Review some of the passages, including Colossians 1:13. Record insights gained by reviewing the passages identified. What are the limits of Satan's dark rule?

APPLY THE TEXT

- Believers should willingly submit to God’s plans.
- Believers can stand with confidence when following God’s will.
- Believers can submit to God’s will in the face of rejection.

What has God asked you to do that you have yet to do? What is the next step for you toward completing that God-given assignment? Ask God for courage to take that next step.

Discuss as a group ways to minister to others in a way that provides strength, especially during times of suffering and difficulty. What one action will the group take as a result of this discussion?

Identify opposition and threats that may stand in your way of submitting to God’s will. How can you demonstrate God’s character to those who oppose or threaten you?

PRAYER NEEDS
