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Charles Billingsley

One Week to Live: Watch and Pray

Scripture: Mark 14:32-50

Summary: In part three in a series on the final week of Christ's life, Charles Billingsley looks at events that took place in the Garden of Gethsemane, looking closely at the suffering of Christ, His heartfelt prayer to His Father, and His warning to His dearest friends, Peter, James, and John.

I so appreciate our worship team. You know I'm normally up here leading them, but I really like just standing down there and singing with y'all. It's a lot of fun. And we're of course, in this series now called *One Week to Live*. We're highlighting some moments in the last week of Christ, and it's an important week. In fact, the book of Mark, over half the book is about the last week of Jesus. This is a big, big deal.

And so a couple of weeks ago we talked about Jesus and His clearing of the temple. Remember Pastor Jonathan was speaking about that. And then this last week Pastor Jonathan was in Matthew 26, where we were in the Upper Room, where Jesus is sharing the Last Supper with His disciples and telling them all kinds of things. In fact, the book of John devotes five chapters alone—chapters 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17—all five of those chapters John devotes to just that moment, the Lord's Supper and what Jesus had to tell them. He had a lot to tell them; He had a lot to share because He knew from that moment on it would get pretty intense.

So in Matthew 26 it speaks of this Upper Room in which they were having this Lord's Supper. I actually have a picture of it for you. This is the Upper Room in which they were sharing that last supper, and as you can see, it's a beautiful place and you can still go there to this day. And it's a very serene and powerful moment when you're standing in this room, knowing this is where Jesus washed the feet of the disciples; this is where Jesus reminded them that He will overcome the world.

This is always where Jesus reminded them and actually tell them, "One of you is going to betray me." And then He reminds all of them that they are going to turn their back on Him at some point, and that's when Peter and the rest of them decide, "No way, that's not going to happen

Lord Jesus. I will die with you. I will die for you.” Not but just a few verses later, we’ll see that they literally all turned their back and ran.

So our setting today is the Garden of Gethsemane. After Jesus shares the Last Supper with His disciples and they move from the Upper Room, they cross what’s known as the Valley of Kidron, the Kidron Valley, the Brook of Kidron, which is this little valley that runs from the eastern side of the city of Jerusalem in between the city of Jerusalem and what we know as the Mount of Olives.

And actually I have a picture of that for you. This is a picture Pastor Jonathan took as we stood there on the Mount of Olives, taken from the eastern side looking back westward toward the city of Jerusalem. You can see the Dome of the Rock there, that big golden dome, and Jesus and His disciples would have walked from somewhere in the southwest corner over there all the way across and over this valley and then up toward the garden.

So we have another picture of us looking the other direction, from the western side, where the walls of Jerusalem are, looking toward the Mount of Olives. If you were to look directly left from there, not 100, 200 yards away is what’s known as the Garden of Gethsemane. There’s a big church there, and it’s a beautiful place.

This is where Jesus and the disciples would have walked. All the way from the Upper Room, across that valley, making their way up the Mount of Olives to this place called the Garden of Gethsemane. But actually the garden wasn’t a garden at all. It was an orchard. It was an orchard of olive trees. One of many in that area, but it was an important place because it was an important place of business. This is where olive oil was pressed. In fact, we have a picture of Gethsemane—there it is—and you can see all these olive trees, and this is where Jesus and His disciples went.

And in fact, we have a close-up of an olive tree, and I wanted to show you this because it’s very interesting when you go to this garden—which you can still go to today; you can visit there. In fact, there is a big church there called the Church of the Nations, and there is a rock inside there where it’s believed that that’s where Jesus prayed, upon that rock. And we’ll get to that in a moment.

But this garden is a beautiful place. It has many olive trees, just like that one. In fact, there is one tree in that garden that carbon dates over 2,300 years old, which means that that tree would have been in this garden when Jesus was in that garden that fateful night with His disciples.

So let’s pick up our story. Mark chapter 14 verse 32 is where we begin. “Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane.” Gethsemane means “oil press.” So like I said, it wasn’t actually a garden; it was actually an olive orchard where they pressed oil. In fact, I even have a picture of an oil press for you to see, and that’s what it looked like. And as they would put that big stone on top of the olives, they would press down on that and it would crush them. And we have a close-up of what it looks like when the olive oil comes running out. It runs down those little troughs and they gather it, and that’s what they do to collect.

But what's amazing is that this place actually means "pressing of oil," where the oil is crushed, where those olives are crushed by the weight of the stone and out flows the oil. And it is a beautiful picture and a great correlation for what is about to happen in the life of Christ. Isn't that interesting that He is in this place?

And you know what? The Bible tells us that this is a familiar place, the Garden of Gethsemane. He was there often. Luke tells us, "As was His custom, they went to Gethsemane." I believe this is where they were staying the week of Passover. I believe that they spent many nights in this garden. In fact, a lot of people would stay the night outside underneath the stars all the time. That's just how people lived back then. And I believe this is where Jesus was taking His disciples. They weren't just staying there overnight, but He also went there often to pray.

I was in high school. I was graduating from high school and my worship pastor, I asked him, "Is there anything I need to make sure I do when I get to college?" And this is the one thing he said. He said, "Yes. When you get to college, find a place, I don't care where it is, just find a place, make it your own, and go there often to pray."

So I found a place when I got to Sanford University in Birmingham, Alabama, a place right under the lights on the tennis courts, of all places. It was the only place I could find where nobody was hanging out at nighttime. And I would go there often. And to this day in my life, I remember many nights where I was there and God spoke to me. I had a place. The garden was such a place. You need a place. I need a place. We all need a place where we go regularly to meet with God. I have a room in my house in which I do that even to this day.

But He was also with familiar faces. Look at verse 32 in Mark 14, and we're going to read in the first half of 33. "[A]nd He said to His disciples, 'Sit here while I pray.' And He took Peter, James, and John with Him." Out of the disciples, Peter, James, and John were the closest. He did all kinds of things with these guys alone. The Mount of Transfiguration, several other instances where Jesus is by Himself with just Peter, James, and John.

I would call these guys, like my friend Dave Busy used to call them, I would call them His garden friends. Every one of us need garden friends. There are acquaintances, but then there are friends. And you know what I'm talking about. These are the friends where when everybody is running out, they are running in. They are friends that you can trust with any information because they are not going to go blabbing all over the community. These are friends that very few of us have very many of. So for your garden friends, be thankful for them, and if you're a garden friend to somebody else, stay faithful; they need you.

So we find Jesus in this setting where He's in a familiar place, He's with familiar faces, and then we begin to see His suffering begin. Verse 33, "[A]nd He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. And then He said to them, 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch.'"

The book of Luke tells us He was in such agony that he sweat drops of blood. That's an actual medical condition. It's called *hemarthrosis*. Several people throughout history have had this. There are actual documented cases of this. one such being Charles IX, after he murdered 30,000

people in one day, lay on his deathbed in agony and anguish and literally sweat drops of blood from the guilt that he felt. This is such emotional duress, this is such stress in the life of somebody that literally your capillaries and your sweat glands are breaking, and so when you are sweating from this intense prayer, there is blood mixed in with the sweat.

And this is exactly the kind of stress that Jesus was under. I cannot stress to you enough what kind of anguish He was really in. This was intense beyond intense; something that very few of us will ever experience ever because of the intensity of this moment. And Jesus is going through it. Why? Well, we're going to find out.

Verse 35, "He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him." Notice that all through Scripture, any time anything happened—good stuff, bad stuff, whatever—Jesus is praying. You just need to go through the Gospels and look at how many times the Bible says, "And Jesus prayed." It's everywhere.

So the first thing I want to point out to you in this garden is one fact that is just consistent throughout the whole life of Christ: He prayed faithfully. Jesus prayed faithfully. You and I? If the Son of God needs to pray that much, how much more do we need to pray? Hello!

But secondly I want you to see how He prayed authentically. Did you see that? He went a little farther and fell on the ground. The proper way for a Jewish man to pray in those times was standing up with his hands out and his head up; that's how Jewish men prayed to the Lord. This is not just a Jewish man; He's known throughout the land as a Jewish rabbi, one of the wisest men. I mean this is Jesus! And He walks in this garden; He's under physical and spiritual and emotional duress; and He falls on the ground.

Can you just imagine what the disciples were thinking? They've been with Jesus all through His ministry. He has been nothing but calm, cool, and collected through it all. I mean think back to the life of Christ, the calming of the wind and the waves with just a spoken word. Their panicked on a boat and the ship is tossing to and fro and He's asleep.

Do you remember that moment when He literally walked through a crowd that was trying to throw Him off of a cliff? The feeding of the five thousand; the stand-downs with the Pharisees; the clearing of the temple with just a whip in His hand. This man is all-powerful, and He's cool and He's calm and collected, and they've never seen Him like this. He literally is in anguish and suffering and falling on His face before God.

But what I like about it is He's authentic. He's not putting on a show. He's being real. I don't know about y'all, but I've been in a lot of meetings where we get back in a back room somewhere or before a concert or before some conference and we stand in a circle and we pray. And we all go around the circle and you know what it's like. If you've ever been in a circle of prayer, you know what's going through your mind. Everybody is praying, and part of you is praying; the other part of you is thinking, "I wonder what I should say so I sound really good here." You remember those moments? Sure, we've all had them.

And every once in a while I'll get around somebody and they are just talking normal and then they start praying and suddenly it's in Old English. "Oh God, thou art—" you know, and I'm thinking wow, that's not pious; that's just weird. Praying is not about being something you're not; it's about being authentic before a loving father, and that's what I love about Jesus. He's authentic. But He's suffering.

Now the third thing I want you to know is that He prays intimately. So He prayed faithfully through His whole life; He prayed authentically; but He also prays intimately. Look at verse 36, "And He said, 'Abba, Father.'" That word *Abba*, do you know it means? It's an Aramaic word that children would use to refer to their daddy. It means "daddy." Jesus, in the heart of His anguish, cries out to His Father and He says, "Daddy."

I can't give you a better picture of what it's like to really pray and to fellowship with our Father than this picture right here. It's me with my boys, and we're at a beach, and that's us. And that's me as a proud daddy, but I've got my sons on my lap and they are kissing their daddy. I can't come up with a better example for what it's like for you and me to pray than that right there.

That's what God wants; He wants us to be authentic and He wants an intimate relationship with you and me, and this is what Jesus has. I just want you to realize that praying is talking to your daddy. He is your perfect and holy and loving daddy. He is not impersonal; He's personal. He's not an object; He has a name. He is our heavenly daddy. He's not some angry judge, He's not abusive, He won't ignore you, He's not distant. He is here. He is accessible. And He loves you and He cares.

By the way, fathers in this room, just a word to you and me. And I'm so convicted to even say this word to you, but when we tell our kids that God is a father, we need to remind ourselves that we hold the same title in our household. So the image we're giving our kids of their earthly father becomes the image with which they see their heavenly Father. You bear a title that means something, dads. Be careful how you live.

But our Daddy, our heavenly Daddy, is the most powerful of them all. And you know what? Because of what Jesus did for us on the cross, you and I have the right to also call our Father "Daddy." Romans 8:15, "For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father'." Jesus is our daddy.

So He prayed faithfully, He prayed authentically, He prayed intimately, but He also prayed fervently. Can you imagine the power of this moment? I mean this is one of the moments in history that is really turning everything on its side. Everything in history is dependent upon this moment, because this is the moment where Jesus finally, with laser-beam focus, turns toward the cross.

But I want you to think about the significance of the moment. I mean here it he King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, who spoke into existence the very ground that He's kneeling upon. Here is the one who lit the nighttime moon with a spoken word, and now the moon stands and watches over His agony. Here is the one who slung the stars into space, and now the stars witness this

tragedy. And here's the one who fashioned the beauty of all creation, and now the branches of His own creation, the olive trees, hover over His misery.

Can you just hear all of creation moaning in despair, knowing what is to come? Can you just hear the cry from heaven as the Son of God pleads for His Daddy? And can't you just see the heart of God as it breaks for His only Son? In fact, Luke says as He prayed, God sent an angel to comfort Him.

So Jesus prays fervently and He prays passionately, but He also prays fearfully. And by this I don't mean that He is afraid of His dad. What I mean is that He has a healthy respect for who His Father is. When we say "pray fearfully to God," we don't mean that you're afraid He's going to punish you with some lightning rod from the sky. What we mean is have a fear of God, a healthy respect for who He is.

Have you ever met somebody famous? I had the privilege of meeting several famous people along the way, and when I was lead singer for a group called New Song in the 90s we were nominated for the Dove Award group of the year, and so that means that we get to actually sing on the show. It was in the Reimann Auditorium in Nashville, a big deal, a lot of well-known artists there. I was pretty young at the time, 25 years old, so I was real excited to be there seeing all these people backstage.

It just so happened, after we finished singing one time that night that I'm standing in this hallway and everybody else has left and here I am in the hallway, by myself, and I notice that there is only one other person in the hallway; everybody else has cleared out. I don't know how this moment happened, but there I am, all alone, three feet from Reba McEntyre. And so it's her and it's me, and I'm like— And I don't know why I did this, but I just went, "Fine, fine, how are you?" Only to realize she had never spoken to me. She didn't ask me how I was doing; neither did she care. But there she was. I just had a healthy respect for who she was. This is a big mega country star and here I am standing next to her and I got nervous. I was sort of in awe.

And that's the kind of healthy respect I'm talking about when we come to the Lord. We don't have to be nervous because of what He'll do; we just need to be in awe of who He is. So when you get alone with God, just know that you're not praying to some cosmic killjoy in the sky; you're praying to the creator of the universe who fashioned you and formed you before you were even born. And He loves you so much, He sent His only Son. When we come into this room, don't take this moment lightly. Come into this room knowing that we are coming into the presence of a holy God who demands a holy life from us.

So Jesus isn't afraid of His Father, but He is afraid of something. What was He afraid of? Do you think He was afraid of death? Of punishment? Of the cross? Well, from a human perspective, I'm sure He wasn't exactly looking forward to it—all the torture, all the pain, all the shame. But that's not what He's afraid of. Many a martyr has come after Christ and even many before Him. Jewish people alone were being martyred for what they believed. Many a Christian has come after Christ and faced death bravely. In fact, they are still doing it to this day. Eighty-six kids just last month murdered in Africa for their faith.

Listen, this is a normal occurrence in this day and age, and people are facing their death for the cause of Christ bravely, and they are being tortured for Him; dying painful deaths for their beliefs. And they are doing it bravely. So I don't think Jesus is any different than any of those other martyrs. Jesus is not afraid to die; He's foretold it twenty-one times in the Gospels. He's not afraid of the pain; He can withstand any punishment from any man, I assure you.

What He's afraid of is found in verse 36, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you." Here it is: "Take this cup from me." What was the cup? I'll tell ya, the cup was the wrath of God. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Psalms, Ezekiel, Habakkuk, Revelation, all these books speak of the cup of God's fury. So what Jesus is afraid of is not the death and the suffering; it's the fact that because He's going to have to bear the sins of the world on His own shoulders, that means His Father will then have to turn His back on Him, and He cannot bear the thought of His Father turning His back on Him.

And yet, it has to happen, doesn't it? And we see the moment it happens on the cross when Jesus cries out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" That's the moment that Jesus dreads the most, and that's the moment Jesus is asking God to take away. But the wrath of God is as much a reality as the love of God, and it's only the blood of Jesus that keeps us from experiencing this full wrath of God.

And by the way, if you don't know the Lord, your soul is subject to this wrath of God unless you have Jesus in your life. I pray you do. I pray you know the Lord, because it's the blood of Christ that saves us from eternity in hell.

So 2 Corinthians 5:21 sums it up well for us. It says, "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Jesus is asking His Father, "Is there any other way to do this?" And heaven is silent. But His faith never wavers.

I think we can learn an important lesson out of this. Listen to this: We must learn to live in willing submission, even when our prayers seem unanswered. And at first glance it looks as though God is ignoring His Son when He asks for this cup to pass from Him, doesn't it? He asks three times in this section of Scripture. He says, "God, may this cup pass from me," and three times we don't hear an answer from God.

But we do see a willing submission from His Son. And you see it in verse 36. at the very end it says this, "Nevertheless, not what I will, but what you will." So I want you to look at the submission of Christ real quickly. And that's the next thing I would tell you. What we need to do is pray submissively. We pray faithfully, we pray authentically, we pray intimately, we pray fervently, we pray fearfully, but we also need to pray submissively. "Nevertheless, not what I will but what you will."

You know there is a genuine calm that comes over us when we place all that we are and all that we have in the Father's hands. And there is a peace in the submission to the Father's will. So the meaning of prayer is not that we force our will on God; it's more that we surrender our will to His.

So as you can see as Jesus is praying, there is something He wants, but He doesn't get an answer. But what He wants more than for the cup to pass from Him is He wants to do the will of His Father. And in the end, that's what we should pray about. Sure, we can pray about things we want; we need to pray about things we need; we need to adore, confess, give thanks, supplication—all those things, all those ways to pray. It's important, and we need to do it. But most of all, we need to ask in our prayers that God would conform our will to His.

And that's exactly what Jesus was doing. He submitted Himself to the will of the Father and the will of the Father was obvious: You must endure the cross. You must drink from this cup, this full wrath of God. It was the only way.

And you see as the progression of Scriptures moves along that as He comes to this realization, His tone begins to change. He is resolved, strengthened, and He has accepted the fact that the Father's will is what it is and now He's ready.

Look at verse 39, "Again He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words. And when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him. Then He came the third time and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand'."

We've seen the submission of Christ. We know that we are in the beautiful setting of the garden. But now I want you to see the supremacy of Christ. Look at this. He prayed confidently, He prayed confidently. Matthew 26 is another telling of this story of the Garden of Gethsemane. In verses 47 it says this, "And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people."

Now when you first read that you think, oh, Judas showed up with a little ragtag bunch of people to arrest Jesus. That's not really what happened. The Greek says he showed up with a *sphera*, a cohort, a Roman cohort, which means a minimum of 450 soldiers, and many people believe it was upwards of 900 soldiers.

This section right here, this first section, seat 338 people. This section seats 338 people. Imagine almost this many soldiers arriving to arrest eleven men—none of whom is armed except for one guy with one sword—and then there's Jesus. You think it was a big deal for them to get this guy? It sure was. They were worried about riots; they were worried about all kinds of stuff; and this is typical of what happens.

If you ever saw the O. J. Simpson chase, you know that every cop in the city of Los Angeles was going after this one guy. It was the perfect time to rob a bank in Los Angeles, I'll tell you that, because every cop that I knew of was chasing O. J. Simpson. It was a big deal. Well, that's what this was. This was a big deal. Jesus was popular. And here they are, in the middle of the night, going to arrest Him. There is not a soldier that doesn't want to be part of that. Six hundred of them.

And they arrive and they arrest Him, and John 18 gives a beautiful picture. Jesus calls out to the dark and He says, “Who are you here for?” And the commander of the army says, “Jesus, the Nazarene.” And then Jesus says, “I am He.” And when He spoke those words, the guards fell down. There was power in the supremacy of Christ. Even in His weakest state, as He is wrestling with this going to the cross and drinking from this cup of wrath, His power is undiminished. I love that.

Verse 48 of Matthew 26, “Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, ‘Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him.’ Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, ‘Greetings, Rabbi!’ and kissed Him.” Customary greeting for that day. Some people say, “How did Judas know where He was?” Because this was His custom to go to the Garden of Gethsemane. He knew Jesus would be there, and that’s where He is.

It’s about midnight, and Jesus says to Him in verse 50, “Friend, why have you come?” Isn’t it interesting He calls him friend? “Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him. And suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.” And then we find out in Luke that Jesus reached down, picked up that ear, and healed that servant. His name was Malchus.

And then Jesus says, “Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled.” This must happen. Jesus has resolved that He must do the will of God. And Jesus reminds everybody in His presence that at any given moment He could summon legions of angels to take Him out of there.

Do you know what one legion of angels is? It’s 6,000 angels. Twelve legions is 72,000 angels. In the book of 2 Kings, one angel—just one—killed 185,000 Assyrian warriors. Now what do you think the damage of 72,000 angels would be? I did the math. That’s enough fire power for these angels to take out 13,320,000 warriors. That’s a lot of fire power.

And yet, Jesus does not summon the angels. Instead, He submits to the Father’s will. Why would He do such a thing? Because He loves us. That’s why. Because He loves you and because He loves me.

“In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, ‘Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me. But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.’” Jesus is reminding them again: I’m doing this. I’m in control here. I’m letting this happen because it has to.

In Luke Jesus says, “This is your hour in the power of darkness.” At that moment, He tells them to let His followers go and at that moment one of the saddest phrases in all the Bible, Matthew 26:55, “Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.”

So what do we learn from this moment in history? Well, if you noticed, I skipped over a verse. It’s our memory verse for the week. I skipped over verse 38, and I did it intentionally. I want you to look at verse 38 with me. It’s back in Mark 14. Verse 38. I want you to read this with me.

“Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh *is* weak.”

There is a two-step formula to defeat temptation in your life, and Jesus gives it to His sleeping disciples. Watch and pray. Let’s just talk about *watch* for a moment. Watch means to keep your eyes wide open; to be aware of your surroundings; to look and see where you’re going; to look and see where you’ve been; to look and see who is beside you, what’s in your life; to look inside of your heart.

First Corinthians 16:13 says, “Watch. Stand fast in the faith. Be brave. Be strong.” First Peter 4:7—incidentally, written by the same man Jesus is talking to, who had fallen asleep—says, “But the end of all things is at hand. Therefore, be serious and watchful in your prayers.” Don’t you reckon Peter was looking back at that moment that he fell asleep on Christ when he wrote those words? I think he was.

But here’s good news. 1 Corinthians 10:13 says, “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man.” We all go through it. “But God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape so that you may be able to bear it.”

Sometimes the way of escape is just putting the remote control away. Sometimes the way of escape is just not clicking that button on your computer. Sometimes the way of escape is not taking that second glance toward somebody who is beautiful, where you don’t give yourself time to have those thoughts.

On and on and on it goes. God provides the way; it’s just a matter of you and me listening and watching. So watch what goes into your mind. Watch what goes into your house. Watch what comes into your home. Watch for warning signs, lest you fall into temptation. And we have to do it every day. Watch every day. Be aware of your steps. Be aware of where you’re going and watch for the warning signs.

It was April 14, 1912, 11:30 PM. A lookout on top of the *Titanic* sees an iceberg and he yells out, “There’s an iceberg!” And so they put reverse engines on and they change their direction and they avoid hitting the iceberg—so they thought. What they didn’t see was underneath, that jagged edge of that massive iceberg that literally sliced a 300-foot gash in the side of that boat.

Now here’s the interesting part. Seven times that day they had received radio signals warning them of this ice field, that it was dangerous. One time they even received a signal by lamp from another ship that had encountered this ice field. But it wasn’t just seven warnings by radio and one warning by light; it was also an additional fourteen warnings over the three days prior to that. Twenty-two warnings in all that this is not an ice field you want to go taking your big ship through, and they did it anyway. You know why they did it? Because a late arrival of a slow ship would be an expensive disgrace for the nicest and most beautiful ship ever built. So they pushed on.

Let me ask you this: Is this how you live your life—charging through life and ignoring temptation or even the results of sin? If you're ignoring the warnings of the Holy Spirit in your heart that you are heading toward danger in life, then you will certainly fall at some point. You will.

Open your eyes. And secondly, pray. Just pray. How do you pray? I gave you seven points already. Pray like Jesus. Pray faithfully. Pray authentically. Pray honestly, intimately. Talk to your dad. Pray fervently. It's okay to be passionate. Pray fearfully; respect His power. Pray submissively, seeking His will and not your own. And pray confidently. You know why? Because He's in control. He knows what's best for you. He knows what you need before you know you need it. He has your back. He's on your side.

So remember, we must watch and we must pray. And when we look back at the suffering in the garden and then look next week towards the cross, we begin to see that for us to love Him is the least we can; for what He went through for us, for what He paid for us, the least we can do is love Him back.

So don't think for one moment that Jesus didn't do all of this without being willing to do so. He came with a purpose—to seek and to save the lost—and He humbled Himself and was obedient to the point of death on the cross. But I also don't want you to think for one moment that God didn't allow all of this. The fact that He did not stop this process is perhaps the greatest demonstration of love in all of history. The Father gave His Son.

And the cross is the ultimate display of love for you and me. Had Jesus not loved us so much, He could have easily walked away from that moment; He could have easily summoned those angels and ignored the cross. And had the Father not loved us so much, He could have easily taken back His Son. But neither faltered. Neither one of them failed. And as painful as this story is to bear, it was necessary that innocent blood was shed for the remission of our sins.

Aren't you thankful for the cross that saved us from ourselves, like the song said? Aren't you thankful for Jesus and the suffering that He bore for you and me. Aren't you thankful for the love of a Father who loves you and me enough to send His own Son to die in our place? "In all these things, we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels or principalities or powers or things present or things to come, heights or depths nor any other created thing [nothing] shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

As we move into these two weeks heading towards the cross and then heading toward Resurrection Sunday, this moment in the garden gives us a picture of the anguish, the heartache, the passion, the suffering of Jesus. The least we can do is love Him back. Let's stand together.

I asked Garrett, if he would, to lead us in this song. I've listened to it a thousand times this week. Many of you even know it. I can't think of a better way for us to close our service than to just worship the Lord and thank Him for His love. I'm going to ask our pastors to come forward. Maybe you just need to come to this altar and pray. Maybe you need to pray passionately or fearfully or confidently that God will heal you or provide whatever it is that you need. Maybe

you just need to come to the altar and worship the Lord. Or maybe you need to take the hand of the person beside you and pray. Whatever it is, this moment is open for the Holy Spirit to move in our hearts. I pray that you will allow Him to do so as Garrett sings.

Extra Audio

Let your fire fall. Lord, we need you. We need you, Father. Let your Holy Spirit reign in this place. We open our mouths to praise you. We open our hearts to your Word. We open our hands because all that we have, we give to you. Oh God.

We welcome you at this place, Lord Jesus. May your Spirit move among us. Speak to our hearts. Sing this song to the Lord, folks. You are good. You are worthy. You are holy. You are peace.

Let me hear you sing it.

Sing the name. Sing it out. That's right. Sing that again. My heart is singing. No other name. Let me hear you sing the words. Bless His name. Jesus.

I'm running. Oh, I'm running. Oh.

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Aren't you thankful that we have a Holy Spirit that will lead us? As we sing this together, just pray to Him.

In your presence, Jesus, in your presence, Jesus. Oh. Jesus. We trust in your, God.

Keywords: Mark 14, Garden of Gethsemane, watch and pray, disciples, temptation