

Introduction: Jesus is finishing up his last meal with the disciples as he tells them he must suffer and die. Can you imagine the fear and worry overwhelming the disciples' minds? They have left everything to follow Jesus and now he tells them that he must suffer and die. Not only that, but Satan has entered into one of you and you will betray me. More than that, Satan has demanded to sift every single one of you like wheat. Do any of you feel like you are being sifted by Satan on a constant basis: pain, sickness, suffering, and loss? How do you find strength to follow the Father's will in the midst of such opposition? The message today is for you.

The point: Disciples should follow Jesus with transparent weakness, total dependence, and unrestrained obedience.

I. Come to God with Transparent Weakness and Total Dependence (22:31-38, 54-62).

• **Satan Requests to Destroy Peter (31).**

- The double use of "Simon, Simon" indicates the seriousness of the situation. Peter is the subject of a satanic attack (similar to Job: 1:6-12; 2:1-6).
- The "you" in v.31 are plural but in v.32 they are singular.
 - This shows that all the leadership is in view but particularly Peter, as a "first among equals." If Peter is exposed, maybe all of them will lose heart.
- "Sift you like wheat" is similar to our English idiom of "pick someone to pieces."
 - Satan wants to bring Peter to ruin.
- Satan has a lot of power in this world:
 - Jesus calls him the "prince" or "ruler of this world" (John 16:11).
 - Paul calls him the "god of this age" and the "ruler of the authority of the air" (2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2).
 - He blinds the minds of unbelievers (2 Cor. 4:4).
 - He can take life, ruin health (Job and his family), torment with demons (Luke 11:18), and provoke evil deeds (Luke 22:3).
 - He will do whatever it takes to destroy your faith (poverty or wealth).
- Peter learned a good lesson that night and decades later he wrote:

"Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world." (1 Peter 5:8-9, ESV)

- Where and how do you sense Satan trying to "sift you like wheat"?
- This reality should drive us to persistent consciousness of our need for God's power. Since our enemy is supernatural, our weapons must be supernatural (Eph. 6:10-20). Suffering and trial drives us to cherish God's grace more earnestly. We need to daily depend on Jesus through Word and prayer. "Only total dependence on the Lord and a sense of weakness without him can preserve even the most zealous disciple" (Bock, 1750).

• **Jesus Intercedes for Peter (32).**

- Failure here means "ultimate, total failure, that is, a total renunciation of Jesus" (Bock, 1742).
- It is clear that Peter will not fall away completely, but only temporarily, since Jesus notes that when he returns he will strengthen his brothers.
- Satan's attempt to destroy Peter fails because Jesus is stronger.

“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.” (Romans 8:26, ESV)

“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.” (Romans 8:31-34, ESV)

- God offers total forgiveness in knowledge of all of our future failures.
- Jesus' remark offers reconciliation before the fact and “pictures how God offers total forgiveness” (Bock, 1743). God knows all of our failures even before we place our faith and trust in him.
- **Peter's Unshakeable Allegiance (33).**
 - Peter gets that following Jesus may cost him everything.
 - Peter underestimated how pressure can sift a person's allegiance.
 - It's easy to confess Jesus in a secluded meal among friends. It's much more difficult when you're surrounded entirely by enemies.
- **Peter's Denial, Restoration and the Rest of the Story (34, 54-62).**
 - The setting of Peter's denials is the courtyard of the high priest's home (Caiaphas).
 - Peter's Three Denials (56-60a).
 - He denies association *with* Jesus and being a *disciple* of Jesus.
 - Peter is in danger of being exposed.
 - The cock crows, Jesus looks, and Peter weeps (60b-62)
 - Peter remembered Jesus' prediction? Did he also remember Jesus' promise of restoration? Could it be possible that Jesus' look was not only meant to bring about remorse, but also to comfort Peter with his presence and promise of restoration?
 - Peter responds with brokenness and repentance (this is in contrast to Judas). Judas reveals an unfaithful heart that will face judgment.
 - Peter will be restored and faithfully follow Jesus. The strengthened becomes the strengthener.
 - John 21:15-17 describes Jesus' restoration of Peter and Jesus' challenge to strengthen others: If you love me, feed my sheep (fulfilled in Acts 1-12).
 - Jesus also tells Peter that he will die as a martyr. Church tradition holds that Peter was crucified upside down (Acts of Peter 37-38).
- **The disciples must prepare to face persecution (35-38).**
 - This passage is similar to two previous passages where Jesus had sent out the Twelve and then the seventy-two disciples commanding them to take nothing for the journey (no staff, bag, sandals, bread, or money; Luke 9:3; 10:3-4). They lacked nothing (22:35).
 - Now, there will be a change in provision. Now you are to take a moneybag, a knapsack, and a sword. Full provision is required. Why?
 - God's plan is coming to pass and finding its fulfillment in Jesus (he cites Isa. 53:12).
 - The point of quoting Isa. 53:12 is to show that he will die a shameful death between criminals. Thus, if Jesus is rejected in such a way by the world, then the disciples will also suffer such rejection. You better be ready.
 - “The point is that the world has made its decision about Jesus, so those who follow him had better be prepared to be treated similarly” (Bock, 1747).

- Why is a sword needed? Is this a metaphorical statement for spiritual armor? Is he encouraging protection for self-defense and against robbers?
 - Two events provide commentary to explain this:
 1. Luke 22:49-51: Jesus rebukes his disciple for using a sword. The disciples misunderstand Jesus and were ready for war (38).
 2. The nonviolent response to persecution in Acts (4:25-31; 12:1-5). They were armed with prayer and faith in God.
 - “It points to readiness and self-sufficiency, not revenge” (Bock, 1147).

II. Receive Strength from God through Fervent Prayer (22:39-46).

- Transition: The meal ends and Jesus departs late in the evening for the Mount of Olives as was his custom (21:37) and the disciples follow him.
- The structure and theme: God responds to faithful prayer.

A	He commands his disciples to pray
B	He withdraws to pray
C	He kneels to pray
D	He prays
E	He is empowered by an angel
D'	He prays more earnestly
C'	He rises from prayer
B'	He returns from prayer
A'	He commands his disciples to pray
- **Jesus commands the disciples to pray (40, 45-46).**
 - Jesus commands his disciples to pray so they won't fall into the traps of Satan (22:28-38).
 - Prayer expresses a desire to depend on God and rest in his care. The disciples will need this attitude in the days to come. The disciples' tendency to faithlessness by not looking to God in prayer stand in contrast to Jesus' total dependence.
 - They don't learn this lesson on prayer here but they eventually do (Acts 4:24-31).
- **Jesus' prayer and strengthening (41-44).**
 - Jesus' humility is seen in his approach to God (kneeling to pray).
 - How do we understand Jesus' prayer? Why is Jesus under such intense agony in prayer that his sweat dripped like clotted blood (only metaphorical)? How do we explain the fact that Jesus, who had never showed the least fear of man or pain or loss, shows so much fear over the cross? Luther commented, “Never man feared death like this man.”
 - Why? It has to do with the cup. In the OT, the cup referred to God's wrath that would be poured out in judgment:

“Wake yourself, wake yourself, stand up, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk from the hand of the Lord the cup of his wrath, who have drunk to the dregs the bowl, the cup of staggering” (Isaiah 51:17, ESV).

 - In the NT, the cup is associated with Jesus' death, suffering, and wrath. Jesus knew that the cross was so much more than physical pain and death; he was going to pour out his soul to death.

“Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.” (Isaiah 53:12, ESV)

Wayne Grudem notes, “Yet to bear the guilt of millions of sins even for a moment would cause the greatest anguish of soul. To face the deep and furious wrath of an infinite God even for an instant would cause the most profound fear” (Grudem). He continues noting that Jesus became the object of “the intense hatred of sin and vengeance against sin which God had patiently stored up since the beginning of the world” (Grudem).

- What caused this great agony in prayer was Jesus peering into the cup, the cup of God’s wrath. He knew he had to drink it to the dregs but he had never once tasted the guilt of sin or separation from God. That’s why he prays, “If it is necessary, it is necessary. But if there is another way, could it be...?” (Bock, 1760).
- Jesus prays with unrestrained obedience to the Father’s will: “not my will, but yours be done.”
- Even in light of this present reality, Jesus responds with complete submission to God’s will. Jesus’ prayer stresses his submission to God’s sovereignty and will. His request is less significant than his desire to do God’s will. He prepares himself by turning to God.
 - Application: Do you have a similar resolve when it comes to obeying the Father’s will? Jesus faces emotional pain, peer pressure, rejection, betrayal, all opportunities and excuses for not obeying. Yet he obeys. What’s your excuse for not completely submitting to the will of God? I’m not talking about God’s will as defined by you, I’m talking about God’s will as defined by the word of God!!! Where is your will competing for God’s will? What today do you need to say to, “Not my will, but your will be done?” Work, marriage, family, relationships, school, missions. You will never face anything more difficult than what Jesus faced on the cross.
- God answers his prayer not by delivering him from death but by giving him strength to face it. Angelic aid appears to strengthen Jesus. God stands with those who suffer according to his will. Jesus won’t be alone.
- Application #1: The reason many of you don’t pray is because you don’t think it makes any difference. We’ve now seen two examples where prayer matters (Peter, Jesus).
- Some thoughts on prayer by D. A. Carson, *A Call to Spiritual Reformation*

“...is it not nevertheless true that by and large we are better at organizing than agonizing? Better at administering than interceding? Better at fellowship than fasting? Better at entertainment than worship? Better at theological articulation than spiritual adoration? Better—God help us—at preaching than at praying?” (17).

- **Lessons from the School of Prayer**
 - Much praying is not done because we do not plan to pray.
 - Adopt practical ways to impede mental drift. (share illustration here).
 - Pray out loud, pray the Scriptures, pray Prayers, pray Songs.
 - Develop a prayer-partner relationship
 - Develop a system for your prayer lists (share my system).
 - Mingle praise, confession, and intercession; but when you intercede, try to tie as many requests as possible to Scripture.
 - Pray until you pray.

3. Trust God’s Sovereign Plan even in the midst of Darkness (22:47-53).

- The events narrated here fulfilled the remarks of Jesus in 22:21-23, 37.
- While Jesus is still speaking with his disciples, Judas along with the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders approached him.
- The horror of Judas’ act is magnified with the mention that he was one of the Twelve.

- Luke doesn't mention whether Judas actually kissed Jesus but Mark 14:45 and Matthew 26:49 mention that Judas used the kiss to identify Jesus.
 - The kiss makes everything certain so there will be no mistakes.
- Jesus responds to Judas with a question ringing with irony. Judas betrayed the "Son of Man" with a kiss of death, not love (22:22)
- The Disciples Defend Jesus (49-50).
 - Their actions make sense based on how they took Jesus' remarks in 22:35-38.
 - Peter is the one who strikes the ear of Malchus (John 18:10).
- Jesus rebukes the disciple and heals the servant (51).
 - Jesus must go through with what is about to happen.
 - His healing of the servant's ear is a picture of Jesus' continual love even to enemies (Luke 6:27-36).
- Jesus rebukes the crowd (52-53).
 - Jesus is shocked that they are arresting him as if arresting a violent criminal.
 - The forces of evil are having their way, but they are not ultimately in control. God is.
- Luke is continuing to imply a question before the reader: who will you continue to stand with? The Jewish leadership or Jesus? Where do you stand? You can place your faith in Jesus that he drank your cup of wrath or you can reject him and drink your own cup of wrath for all of eternity. Jesus came to rescue you from the punishment and wrath of sin. Will you embrace him today?
- God is in complete control of the events surrounding his death
 - His predictions come to pass exactly as he said.
 - Peter's denial, his death between criminals, Judas' betrayal
 - If it's God's will that Jesus face betrayal, rejection, and suffering, then he will provide if Jesus' followers face suffering (21:12-19).
 - His word and his plan can be trusted even in the midst of darkness.

The Lord's Prayer: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matt. 6:9-13).