

This lesson picks up immediately after Jesus eats the Passover meal with His disciples. Jesus is about to go to the cross for the sins of the world and He goes to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray in order to prepare Himself to bear His Father's wrath for the sins of the world. His Father's wrath against sin would be a heavier weight to bear than the physical suffering Jesus would endure.

Verses 1-25: About two days before the Passover (vs. 1-2), Jesus is eating a meal in the house of Simon the leper with His disciples when a woman with an expensive alabaster box of ointment came in and poured its contents on His head (v. 3). When the disciples complained about what they perceived as a waste of money, Jesus defended her and said she had anointed Him for His burial (vs. 4-9). After the meal, Judas Iscariot went to the chief priests and agreed to betray Jesus to them (vs. 10-11). When the day came for making preparations for the Passover, Jesus sent His disciples ahead to make the arrangements (vs. 12-16). That evening, Jesus sat down to eat the Passover with the twelve (v. 17). After announcing that one of them would betray Him (vs. 18-21), Jesus instituted what we now call "The Lord's Supper" (vs. 22-25).

26 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

"And when they had sung an hymn" – Commentators believe that they likely sang Psalm 118, which was traditionally sung at Passover. This psalm begins with the line *"O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: because his mercy endureth for ever."* Considering that Jesus was conscious of the fact that He was about to go to the cross in obedience to His Father, this psalm was no doubt very meaningful to Him.

"they went out into the mount of Olives" – This mountain was the location of the garden called Gethsemane (v. 32). This garden was a spot that Jesus frequented when He wanted to be alone to pray, and so He chose this place intentionally, knowing what would transpire there later that evening.

27 And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. 28 But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.

"And Jesus saith unto them" – As they are on their way to Gethsemane, Jesus begins to tell them what to expect that evening, which demonstrated that He would not be surprised by it. This will be His last opportunity to talk to them as a group before His crucifixion.

"All ye shall be offended [to stumble; to fall away] because of me this night" – The disciples have faithfully followed Jesus up to this point, but circumstances will arise later that evening that will cause them to temporarily stop following Him.

"for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered" – Jesus quotes Zech. 13:7 to show that the events that evening were predicted in scripture. Nothing about Jesus going to the cross was by chance, accident, or a surprise to Him. It was sovereignly ordained by God.

"But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee" – Jesus is already looking beyond the cross and tells the disciples where to find Him after His resurrection. The angel at the empty tomb would later instruct Mary and the other women to remind the disciples to meet Jesus in Galilee (**Mark 16:7** *"But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you"*), which they did (**Matt. 28:16-17** *"Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted"*). Jesus apparently had already told them which mountain to go to.

29 But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I. 30 And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. 31 But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.

"But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I" – Peter is brimming with self-confidence and boldly proclaims that he will never turn his back on Jesus, even if all the other disciples were to turn away.

"And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny [to deny any association with someone] me thrice" – Peter said he definitely would never turn away from Jesus and yet Jesus says that Peter will not even make it through the night without denying three times that he knows Jesus.

"But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise" – Either motivated by his pride or his disbelief that he could ever deny being associated with Jesus, Peter insists even more strongly that there was no possible way that he would deny Jesus, even if it meant that he had to die along with Jesus.

"Likewise also said they all" – The other disciples also chimed in, sincerely to some extent but apparently also not wanting to look inferior to Peter.

32 And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. 33 And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; 34 And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.

"And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray" – They arrive at the garden, a place where Jesus liked to go to pray. Jesus wants to pray in order to prepare Himself for His suffering and death that will happen over the next several hours. Judas is familiar with the location (**John 18:1-2** *"When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples. And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples"*).

"And he taketh with him Peter and James and John" – These three were Jesus' inner circle. He allowed them to see things about Himself that the other disciples did not get to see, such as the raising of a damsel from the dead (Mark 5:37) and the transfiguration (Mark 9:2).

"and began to be sore amazed [to be terrified], and to be very heavy [distressed]" – The only time we ever see Jesus afraid is when He is about to face the full brunt of His Father's wrath upon the sin of the world. His distaste at the prospect makes Him very distressed.

"And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful [extreme sorrow] unto death: tarry ye here, and watch [be attentive]" – Jesus is so overcome with sorrow over the prospect of facing His Father's wrath against sin that He feels like He could die. He feels an extreme need to pray and asks Peter, James and John to stay there and be on watch while He prays, perhaps because He knows that Judas is soon coming with a multitude of men to arrest Him.

35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. 36 And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.

“And he went forward a little, and 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 unto thee; take away this cup from me” – The wrath against the sin of the world and the separation from His Father (if only temporarily) was so terrifying to Jesus that He asks His Father if there was another way to accomplish the salvation of the world. The word “Abba” is an intimate Aramaic term for one’s father, similar to our English word “Daddy.” Knowing His Father’s infinite wisdom and knowledge, Jesus intimately appeals to His Father to find another way so that He could be spared the horrible task of facing His Father’s wrath against sin.

“nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt” – Jesus never once rebelled against His Father’s will but submitted Himself fully, knowing that His Father’s will was best. Since Jesus submitted to His Father’s will, why do we question God’s will and think that we know better?

37 And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch one hour? 38 Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.

“And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch one hour?” – After praying, Jesus returns to where He had left the disciples and finds them asleep. He wakes Peter and questions why they are sleeping during such an important time. He had asked them to watch while He prayed and they had failed to do so.

“Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation” – He again tells them to watch (be alert) and adds that they should also pray because they are going to face temptation shortly, a temptation to which they will succumb by abandoning Jesus (v. 50).

“The spirit truly is ready [willing], but the flesh is weak” – Jesus was not questioning their loyalty to Him or to God, but He knew how weak the flesh was when it came to obeying God. They should have been watching and praying but they found it hard to stay awake due to the fact that it was late and they were sleepy. The weakness of their flesh will manifest itself when they abandon Jesus (v. 50).

39 And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words. 40 And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer him.

“And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words” – Jesus apparently felt that He was not yet spiritually ready to face the cross and so He turns away again to pray, saying the same words that He did the first time.

“And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,)” – After praying the second time, Jesus returns to find the disciples asleep again because they were sleepy and apparently did not see the importance of remaining awake.

“neither wist they what to answer him” – He apparently addresses them again similar to the way He did the first time because they felt compelled to answer Him but did not know what to say. They obviously did not understand the gravity of what was happening.

41 And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42 Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

“And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come” – After praying a third time, Jesus is satisfied that He is spiritually ready for what is to come (“it is enough”), and so there is no longer any need for the disciples to remain awake. He states that “the hour is come.” In John’s gospel there are various references to Jesus’ hour not having yet come (John 2:4, 7:30; 8:20) but now Jesus states that the “hour” (or time) had come for Him to suffer and die for the redemption of the world.

“behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners” – The path to the cross will begin with His betrayal into the hands of wicked men.

“Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand” – Jesus had told the disciples to sleep (v. 41) but now He apparently sees the torches approaching as Judas and the multitude come to arrest Him. Jesus knows exactly who they are and why they are coming, so He wakes the disciples and has them get up to face those who are coming.

43 And immediately, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.

“And immediately, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve” – Judas arrives while Jesus is telling the disciples to get up. Mark makes a point to remind us that this Judas was one of the twelve disciples so that we remember that Jesus is being betrayed by one of His own.

“and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders” – When arranging the betrayal of Jesus with the chief priests, Judas provided the time and place to arrest Jesus and the chief priests provided the “muscle.” They come with an overwhelming number of men with weapons to ensure that Jesus is unable to escape.

44 And he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, and lead him away safely.

In order to minimize confusion and collateral damage, Judas had already agreed on a sign to identify Jesus so that the multitude could quickly apprehend the correct man. The Greek word translated “safely” refers to securely apprehending someone so that they cannot escape. Apparently Judas wanted minimize the chance that the other disciples could interfere and help Jesus escape.

45 And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, master; and kissed him. 46 And they laid their hands on him, and took him.

The irony and hypocrisy of Judas’ kiss is obvious and Luke’s gospel records Jesus’ comment on it (**Luke 22:48** “*But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?*”). The Greek indicates an intense form of the word “kiss,” implying that Judas made an overt (and hypocritical) show of affection toward Jesus, perhaps to make it obvious that this was the One that the multitude should arrest.