

**STORY**

8/5/03

Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, His Betrayal and Arrest - Matthew 26:14-16, 36-56, Mark 14:10-11, 32-50, Luke 22:39-53, John 18:1-11

TEACHER PRAYER

Dear Father in heaven, I come to You now as Your Son came to You in the Garden on the night He was betrayed, humble and asking for Your help. I come on behalf of the children - Your little lambs - whom I am called to teach. Give me, I pray, wisdom and understanding that I might present to them Your words and Your will in all their truth and majesty. I pray that Your Holy Spirit might work through me to bring the power of Your Word to bear on their little hearts. Bless my instruction of these precious little ones. Let them see Your hand in their lives. This I ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

VOCABULARY

Legion - Although a full Roman legion had 6,000 men, this word could also refer to simply a great multitude. (cf. Mark 5:9)

OUTER AIM

Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, was betrayed by Judas and arrested.

INNER AIM

Jesus submitted to His Father's will to save mankind.

BACKGROUND

(Rupprecht Bible History References Vol. 2, pp. 346-360)

Jesus had just celebrated the Passover with His disciples and had instituted the Lord's Supper. Surely the disciples must have been confused by Jesus' words: "Take eat, this is My body which is broken for you." "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." They were soon to find out just what Jesus meant by those words. Jesus and the eleven traveled from the upper room where they celebrated the Passover to a place they had used many times - the Garden of Gethsemane. Judas went out from the upper room and went straight to the chief priests and elders, who assigned to him a "great multitude" of men charged with arresting Jesus.

v. 14-16

- ▶ Judas' act of betrayal was calculated and premeditated rather than spontaneous.
- ▶ We cannot say for certain exactly what his motives might have been.
- ▶ Certainly money played a role, but Judas was a complex character, and there could well have been other factors that prompted his decision.
- ▶ The infamous thirty pieces of silver were worth about 120 denarii. A denarius was generally considered to be equal to one day's wage.

v. 36-39

- ▶ Gethsemane was probably more like a small park than a garden.
- ▶ Once again Jesus left the majority of the disciples behind (perhaps at the outer edge of the park) and took only Peter, James, and John to be near Him.

- ▶ Jesus did this not only to have someone close to Him in this time of great anguish, but also so that there might be witnesses for future generations.
- ▶ Few (if any) men can say that they have known this kind of sorrow.
- ▶ Jesus was not so full of grief that He wanted to end His own life to escape.
- ▶ Jesus was to the point where the anguish itself could kill Him.
- ▶ Perhaps this is why an angel was sent to strengthen him (cf. Luke 22:43).
- ▶ Luke also records that "His sweat became like great drops of blood, falling to the ground." Many believe that Luke is here simply telling us that Jesus was sweating profusely. There is, however, a medical condition known as *hematidrosis* where under conditions of great stress or anguish blood can actually mix with sweat.
- ▶ Jesus here demonstrated for all mankind the model prayer.
- ▶ As a true man, Jesus was suffering as no other man has or will. He openly expressed His will to His Father, that "this cup might pass from Me."
- ▶ Yet note well His unwavering submission to His Father's will: "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."

v. 40-41

- ▶ How Jesus, as true man, longed for the companionship and support of His closest men.
- ▶ They failed Him, as all men failed Him. Jesus was utterly alone when He carried our sins to the cross. "God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us."
- ▶ Even His heavenly Father forsook Him on the cross.
- ▶ With His words "Watch and pray" Jesus here advocates that which has been all but lost to our modern society: self-discipline and self-denial.
- ▶ We can sympathize with the disciples who were very tired after a long day and a big meal.
- ▶ Jesus tries to impress upon them the seriousness of the occasion and the critical importance that they "watch and pray." The flesh is indeed weak.

v. 42-46

- ▶ The fact that Jesus repeated the same prayer three times is telling.
- ▶ God wants us to be persistent when we pray, so long as we add the words Jesus added: "Your will be done."
- ▶ It is probably incorrect to imagine that Jesus went to the spot where He prayed (about a stone's throw from the three), spoke only the few words recorded in our text, and came right back.
- ▶ He may have repeated these words many times. He may have added others, which would explain the slightly different wording in the three accounts.
- ▶ The fact is His prayers must have taken some time, since not only had His men fallen asleep, they apparently slept for some time.
- ▶ Jesus seemed surprised to find that the disciples were still sleeping when He came back the third time: "Are you still sleeping and resting?"

v. 47-50

- ▶ The chief priests and elders were not about to take any chances.
- ▶ That is why they not only hired Judas, but they also sent "a great multitude" to arrest a gentle man like Jesus.
- ▶ John alone recorded the amazing spectacle of how this rough, tough, well-armed band of ruffians retreated and fell to the ground when Jesus told them who He was.
- ▶ The message here is clear. No matter how tough or well armed, these men had no power over Jesus. Jesus willingly placed Himself under their power.

- ▶ Judas identified Jesus with a kiss - not an uncommon greeting in those days. His brazen hypocrisy, however, is not lost on Jesus, who yet in love calls him "friend."

v. 51-54

- ▶ All twelve of the Apostles were together now.
- ▶ Peter, still emboldened by the Lord Jesus, who stood at his side, swung with a clumsy fisherman's hand at one of the guards, Malchus, and cut off his right ear.
- ▶ Healing the ear by the power of His touch, Jesus assures His men that He could have any number of angels at His disposal.
- ▶ Twelve legions, in Roman terms, was equal to 72,000 soldiers. One single angel would have been more than a match for even this great crowd.
- ▶ Jesus willingly gave His life for us sinners.

v. 55-56

- ▶ Jesus shamed the men who came out to arrest Him.
- ▶ He reminded them that He had been with them daily in the temple, but they hadn't the courage to arrest Him there, in the daylight.
- ▶ They were operating instead under the cover of darkness, the favorite time of evil men.
- ▶ This was very likely not a quiet, gentle arrest, though Jesus would certainly have gone with them without a struggle.
- ▶ The disciples, we are told, did not simply wander off. They fled for their lives.
- ▶ One of them (most believe it was Mark) was grabbed by the mob. In terror and shame he left his cloak and fled naked into the night. Jesus was alone, in the midst of the hostile crowd.

STUDENT PRAYER

Dear Jesus, I can't even imagine how much You suffered for me in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross of Calvary. I'm sorry that my many sins made it necessary for You to have to suffer as You did, but with all my heart I thank You for doing it. I could never have done what You did, and I surely did not deserve to have You suffer like that in my place. Thank You, dear Jesus, for suffering the punishment of hell for my sins. Amen.

PRESENTATION

If your students enjoy acting out the Bible stories, this lesson certainly lends itself to that. Otherwise it is best to tell this lesson in your own words since there are many interesting facts in the different accounts that should be included.

ACTIVITY ONE- Use the cover picture and the questions and directions below to help students review the lesson.

1. Draw a line under the people Jesus took with Him into the garden. What were their names? What did Jesus ask them to do while He prayed?
2. Draw an X on the picture of Jesus praying to His Father. What did He ask His Father to do for Him? How did He end His prayer? To whom do we pray for help? How should we end our prayer?
3. Draw a circle around the part of the picture that shows what Jesus found His disciples doing when He went back to them. How did Jesus feel?
4. Draw a box around the part of the picture that shows what made all the noise at the gate of the garden. Why did the crowd have swords and spears?

5. Make a red dot under the person who showed the enemies where to find Jesus. What was his name?
6. Jesus did not use His great power to escape. He did not let His disciples fight to rescue Him. Why was Jesus willing to be captured?

ACTIVITY TWO - The figures below may be cut out and used to dramatize the story. Figures may be glued to craft sticks to make puppets, or moved around on a flat surface, or they may be glued in place on a large sheet of paper, to recreate the story setting. If there is time in class, they could be used for review instead of the question/activity at the top of the page. If not, give each student an envelope so that the pieces may be taken home and used to retell the story with the child's family.

APPLICATIONS

1. Just as Jesus reached out to Judas, so also He calls out to us through His Word when we are in danger of falling into sin. If we deprive ourselves of a regular study of His Word, we cut ourselves off from His words of warning and encouragement. Many times we have to receive this strengthening before the temptation comes. The disciples trusted in their own strength and thought they could handle the temptation. They were wrong.
2. Picture for the children the extreme suffering of Jesus, together with why He had to suffer as He did. Note too that the suffering was mental, emotional, and physical. Illustrate by asking how they would feel if all their friends abandoned them when they were in trouble and needed help.
3. No matter how much we might want something in this life, we ought always to follow Jesus' example and pray, "Your will be done." Jesus knows what is best for our spiritual well-being. Ask your students to think of examples of things they might pray for and why God might say, "No." (ie. you might get injured if you had your own car or horse; you might skip church on Sundays if you had your own cabin, etc.)
4. We can never stress often enough or strongly enough the tremendous love Jesus had for us to endure what He did. Note also the power that was His. How tempting it would have been for us to strike back at anyone who tried to treat us as he treated Jesus.

PASSAGES

These passages can be assigned as memory work or simply discussed in class as to how they fit the lesson.

Lower

Mark 14:38 - Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.

1 Tim. 1:15 - Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

Romans 4:24-25 - Jesus our Lord... was delivered up because of our offenses.

Middle any of the above and...

Matthew 26:41 - Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Luke 24:26 - Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?

Upper any of the above and...

1 John 3:1 - Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!

Hebrews 2:18 - For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

HYMN CHOICES

"Go to Dark Gethsemane" (TLH #159:1,4)

"Christ, the Life of All the Living" (TLH #151:1-2,7)

"Glory Be to Jesus" (TLH 1#58:1-4)

"Abide with Us, the Day is Waning" (TLH #194:1,3)