

Fact Sheet for **“Gethsemane”**  
**Matthew 26:36-46**

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For the past eight sermons we have been in the Psalms. The Psalms are poetry, the language of both thought and emotion. Today we are going to the Gospels, a very different type (*or genre*) of Biblical literature, with very different ways to develop applications for today. The Gospels are all about Jesus Christ. We see so much about our Savior from their record. As we follow Jesus through his birth, through one brief moment in his boyhood, and mostly through his public ministry we can pick-up gems of truth about other aspects of our faith. Today we are taking up where I left off several years ago from a sermon series on a harmonization of the Gospels. This is actually my 208<sup>th</sup> sermon in that series. Jesus and his disciples have come through Palm Sunday, the Last Supper, and the Upper Room Discourse (or Jesus' Last Discourse). They have arrived at the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives, in plain sight of the temple. John's gospel gives us the transition from the Upper Room Discourse to that garden (John 18:1). The Garden of Gethsemane still exists. You can go there today. In fact, some of the olive trees you find there were also there when Jesus came with his disciples that night to pray.

*Matthew 26:36-46 has parallel passages in Mark 14:32-42 and Luke 22:39-46.*

**ESV 36 Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here, while I go over there and pray."**

Remember that Judas Iscariot had already left to betray Jesus, so only eleven disciples were with Jesus. Luke 22:39-40 adds a little more context. They were going to be emotionally stressed in the coming hours, and would have ample temptation to respond poorly.

**37 And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled.**

**ESV Mark 14:33** And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled.

These three were the inner circle of the disciples. They went up on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus, John was the one who leaned back on Jesus' breast at the Last Supper. Jesus took these three a little bit further than the others, with a request.

**38 Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me."**

Jesus was asking these three disciples to keep watch with him in prayer.

**39 And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."**

We learn more of Jesus' prayer from Mark 14:35-36. Luke records that Jesus knelt down. You have the picture of Jesus kneeling with his face to the ground. What Jesus requested was not possible, and the Father would not grant it. Nonetheless Jesus firmly was committed to doing the Father's will.

At this point Luke's gospel includes two verses. These verses do have some formidable textual difficulties. In other words they are not found in some of the best manuscripts. However they are found in most Greek texts of Luke.

**ESV Luke 22:43-44** And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him.

**ESV Luke 22:44** And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

One commentator puts it this way. "His sweating was apparently so profuse that it looked like blood dripping from a wound..."<sup>1</sup> Jesus didn't sweat blood!

**40 And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour?"**

Luke mentions that Jesus found them "sleeping for sorrow".

The disciples were filled with the Passover meal and were sleepy. They gave in to this and did not keep watch with Jesus in prayer.

**41 Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."**

They would be tempted. Peter in particular would give in to temptation.

**42 Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." 43 And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy.**

Mark has this comment.

**ESV Mark 14:40** And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer him.

**44 So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. 45 Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.**

Mark's gospel makes it clear that Jesus also found them sleeping this third time.

**46 Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand."**

What do we learn about Jesus from this passage?

**Jesus wasn't committed to the Father's will simply because he was God the Son. It was his real choice.**

Take a moment to read Hebrews 4:15 and 5:8. We also see in Jesus' struggle in the Garden of Gethsemane that Philippians 2:5-8 is beautifully illustrated. Peter, on the other hand, would fall prey to temptation very quickly.

Here's a question. Could Peter have chosen to not deny Christ? After all, Jesus had said that Peter would deny him. Let's push this a little farther. As God knows what the future will bring, does his knowing force that future to happen? Let's go farther still. As God knows that we will sin, does his knowing force us to sin? That would be ludicrous. Consider times when you are tempted. Read Romans 6:12. Paul would not have written this unless it was possible for us to do what he was saying. Can you ever say truthfully that you cannot gain victory over a particular sin? Look again at Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. Gain strength from Jesus' example in your own struggle with temptation. Pray that you will not fall into temptation. But be prepared at times for a real struggle at times. Are you up to it?

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<sup>1</sup> The Expositors Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke; p. 1032.