

Christ Community Covenant Church
His Love Changes Everything: The Garden of Gethsemane
Pastor Dave Scherrer - April 9, 2017

The Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem and the busy Holy Week of activities



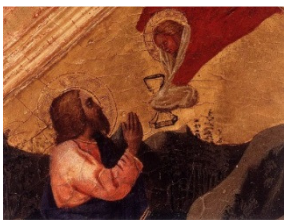
12 century Romanesque Altar frontal, St. Vincent d'Espinelles, Cataluna



Jacob Lawrence, "Palm Sunday," (1956)

Also Gethsemane by Carl Bloch, Danish painter 1870's, 23 paintings for the Chapel at Frederiksberg Palace in Denmark

Then our study for today regards the changes everything love revealed in the Garden Gethsemane.



Masaccio, 1425, tempera on wood



Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, Spanish, 1750

The battle for your life was first lost in a garden but then won back in a garden!

I believe that the greatest real life drama ever in human history happened on Thursday evening April 2, 33 AD. That is the best guess for the Passover week computations of that time, putting Jesus' birth in 3 BC and the start of his public ministry about 30 AD. What happened on Thursday evening April 2, 33 AD? Let me just give you the setting of the drama.

The Setting

The disciples spend Wednesday the previous day resting with Mary and Martha and their raised from the dead brother Lazarus in Bethany at Simon the Lepers house, about a mile and half mile walk west of Jerusalem. That evening Mary anointed him with an expensive vial of perfume. As it turned out, that would turn out to be his burial anointing. After a final day of teaching, Jesus retires to his secret upper room to spend one last evening with the disciples. There he washed the disciples' feet and confronts their pride and jealousies. He has supper with them at sunset and establishes the sacred Eucharist, the communion of the Lord's Supper. Then he reveals he is to be betrayed and he teaches his final sermon recorded in John 14-16 which scholars call the Upper Room Discourse, also called the Death Bed Discourse. This all followed by the High Priestly prayer of Chapter 17. Then they sang a hymn and walked a short distance across the Kedron Valley to the little garden of Gethsemane (the wine press garden) where the disciples often went to pray, perhaps 11 pm. And this is where the drama begins, with a tired called man bent in prayer, broken in sorrow, despondent and alone.

Luke 22:39-46 ³⁹ And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. ⁴⁰ And when he came to the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." ⁴¹ And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, ⁴² saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." ⁴³ And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. ⁴⁴ And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. ⁴⁵ And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, ⁴⁶ and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation."

Mark 14:32-42 ³² And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." ³³ And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. ³⁴ And he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch." ³⁵ And going a little farther, he 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 for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." ³⁷ And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? ³⁸ Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." ³⁹ And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. ⁴⁰ And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer him. ⁴¹ And he came the third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough; the hour has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴² Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand."

As with any drama, what makes it compelling is the stakes, what is at risk.

The Stakes in Play

And this night in the garden, the eternal fate of humanity is the wager. The hope of salvation or the promise of wrath, all falling on the shoulders of the man who could barely hold his head up in anguish. You see, the God-Man who never sinned is about to become the centerpiece of God's eternal wrath. The full weight of humanities' folly and disobedience would fall on the cross, God would turn His back on His only son for the first time, the Godhead fellowship broken. It was of this that Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5

2 Corinthians 5:21 ²¹ He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

There was no other way for humankind to be saved that through the innocent and substitutionary suffering of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What we do know is that there was superhuman suffering for Jesus, suffering beyond all that we might dream of or even that the depraved mind of human evil could concoct. This would be the suffering of the ancient cup of wrath of the judgement of God.

The Superhuman Suffering: The Cup of Wrath

The suffering did not start with the kangaroo courts of Herod and Caiaphas and Pilate, or with the beatings and the hammering of nails into his hands and feet. Indeed the greatest test and suffering I believe was in this hour of the garden prayer. Suffering no other heart or mind could know. It was the anticipating of separation from the Father and then in fact becoming the target of His wrath. We read . . .

Matthew 26:37-38 “sorrowful and troubled” and “overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death”

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

The cup of wrath is the great and terrible day of the Lord, predicted and even foreshadowed in the Old Testament;

Psalm 75:6-8

For not from the east or from the west
and not from the wilderness comes lifting up,
⁷ but it is God who executes judgment,
putting down one and lifting up another.
⁸ For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup
with foaming wine, well mixed,
and he pours out from it,
and all the wicked of the earth
shall drain it down to the dregs.

Jeremiah 25:15-18 ¹⁵ Thus the LORD, the God of Israel, said to me: “Take from my hand this cup of the wine of wrath, and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. ¹⁶ They shall drink and stagger and be crazed because of the sword that I am sending among them.” ¹⁷ So I took the cup from the LORD's hand, and made all the nations to whom the LORD sent me drink it: ¹⁸ Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, its kings and officials, to make them a desolation and a waste, a hissing and a curse . . .

You see sin has its wages and they must be paid. It is the Law, as CS Lewis put it, it is the deep magic woven into the fabric of ancient Narnia.

Sin and its wages

Romans 3:23, 6:23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and the wages of sin is death.

Let me say it again. This is the love that changes everything because . . .

There was no other way for humankind to be saved that through the innocent and substitutionary suffering of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Christ absorbed the wrath of God on our behalf — and he did it by suffering.

Galatians 3:13, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us — for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree.’” The wrath of God that should have caused our eternal suffering fell on Christ. This is the glory of grace, and it could only come by suffering.

2. Christ bore our sins and purchased our forgiveness — and he did it by suffering.

Isaiah 53:5, “He was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities.” The sins that should have crushed us under the weight of guilt were transferred to Christ. This is the glory of grace, and it could only come by suffering.

3. Christ provided a perfect righteousness for us that becomes ours in him — and he did it by suffering.

Philippians 2:7–8, “He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” This is the glory of grace, and it would come only by suffering.

4. Christ defeated death — and he did it by suffering death.

Hebrews 2:14–15, “Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.” This is the glory of grace and it would come only by suffering.

5. Christ will bring us finally to God — and he will do it by his suffering.

1 Peter 3:18, “Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God.” The ultimate achievement of the cross is not freedom from sickness but fellowship with God. This is what we were made for: seeing and savoring and showing the glory of God. This is the glory of grace, and it could only come by suffering.

It was the will of the Father and the love of the Son nailed him to a cross.