

Lesson 56

Waiting for Him

Icebreaker:

What do you do when you are waiting for someone?

Introduction:

As the Last Supper drew to close Jesus prayed for His disciples and then blessed the fourth cup of wine. *BARUCH ATAH ADONAI, ELOHENU MELECH HA-OHLAHM, BO-RAY P'REE HA-GAFEN! Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who creates the fruit of the vine.*

This fourth cup of wine, the Cup of Elijah, is the culmination of the Passover meal and for every Israelite points forward to the future fulfillment of all of God's promises. It is also called the Cup of Praise or Hope and refers specifically to Exodus 6:8, *"I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you for a possession; I am the LORD."* For fifteen centuries the Israelites had been observing this ritual and now the Lord's Passover was literally being fulfilled before the disciple's eyes.

As the men drank the cup they ended by singing the Hallel¹. They had no idea that what they were singing would come to pass within a matter of hours. Listen to the last fifteen verses of Psalm 118:

*The LORD is my strength and song, and He has become **my salvation**.*

*The sound of joyful shouting and salvation is in the tents of the righteous; the right **hand** of the LORD does valiantly. The right **hand** of the LORD is exalted; the right hand of the LORD does valiantly.*

*I will not die, but **live, and tell** of the works of the LORD. The LORD has disciplined me severely, but He has not given me over to death.*

*Open to me the gates of righteousness; I shall enter through them, **I shall give thanks to the LORD. This is the gate of the LORD;** the righteous will enter through it. I shall give thanks to You, for You have answered me, and You have become my salvation.*

*The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief corner stone. This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. **This is the day** which the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. O LORD, do save, we beseech You; O LORD, we beseech You, do send prosperity!*

*"Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD; we have blessed you from the house of the LORD. The LORD is God, and He has given us light; **bind the festival sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar.***

*You are my God, and I give thanks to You; You are my God, I extol You. Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for **His loving kindness is everlasting.***

¹ 1 Psalms 113-118.

When they finished singing the hymn they walked out into the night. The air was cool but not unpleasant and the full moon bathed the whole scene in a surreal light. Jesus and the disciples exited the city through the nearby Essene Gate. They descended the steep slope down into the Valley of Ben Hinnom, went past the field that would later be called Haceldama² and crossed the Kidron brook.

Following the course of the murmuring stream northward they passed the two silent sentinels, Zechariah's Tomb and Absalom's Pillar, standing awash in the ghostly moonlight. An occasional barking dog punctuated the stillness of the night, which hung like a cloak about them and the dim glow of firelight could be seen emanating from within the Temple precincts. The short journey terminated at a grove of olive trees known as . . . Gethsemane, "the oil press."

Read the Scripture:

Matthew 26:36-46, Mark 14:32-42, Luke 22:39-46

In the Garden of Gethsemane

Matthew 26:36-46, Mark 14:32-42, Luke 22:39-46, and John 18:1

(Gospels forged together into one seamless story, in collaboration with New American Standard Bible,
authored by Michael Gibson, Founder of Spirit & Truth, dba Key 2 Changes: "Follow Me: A Message from God", a Journey with Jesus)

And they came to a place named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here until I have prayed." And He took with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be very distressed and troubled. And He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death; remain here and keep watch." And He went a little beyond them, and fell to the ground, and began to pray that if it were possible, the hour might pass Him by. And He was saying, "Abba! Father! All things are possible for Thee; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what Thou wilt." And He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Keep watching and praying, that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Thy will be done." And again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him. And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and began to pray, saying, "Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done." Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground. And when He rose from prayer, He came the third time to the disciples and found them sleeping from sorrow, and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough; Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Arise, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!"

Group Discussion:

1. Do you find it hard to wait?
2. Why or why not?

² Haceldama - After Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver; he tried to return the money to the chief priests and elders. They decided it would not be lawful to put the money into the Temple treasury, since it was the price of blood. Instead they bought the potter's field for a burial place for strangers. And from that day it has been called Haceldama, the Field of Blood.

The Commands:

1. Sit here until I have prayed.
2. Remain here and keep watch.
3. Keep watching and praying.
4. Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.
5. Arise, let us be going.

The Lesson:

The "oil press" was located in a cave³ that was situated at the north end of the grove of olive trees. It was here that Jesus probably told eight of His disciples to remain until He had prayed. From His interaction with the disciples we can learn some lessons about waiting for our Lord to do something.

Sometimes it is boring having to wait on the Him. We want released into ministry but it doesn't happen. We pray for something and it seems like He doesn't answer. We wait for His direction but it doesn't come. Why do we have to wait? The hours roll by. Sometimes we remind Him, "Lord it's easy for you to say "wait" because your in heaven, living forever, but we're here on earth in these temporary bodies. Our days are numbered and they're slipping by pretty fast. What's the hold up?"

Does any of this sound familiar to you?

The disciples were no different than we are, so Jesus gave them some instructions on what to do while they were waiting for Him. He began by telling the disciples to sit. "*Sit here until I have prayed.*" Sitting denotes a restful state. It is not working and it is not sleeping. It is the position of readiness for another action. We, as Christians would do well to remember that the Lord is going before us to make the way. The book of Hebrews tells us that Jesus, our High Priest, "*lives to make intercession for us.*" And for those of us who do wait for the Lord, God promises they "*will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.*" (Isaiah 40:31)

Jesus accompanied by Peter, James and John separated themselves from the larger group by walking a short distance into the grove of trees to the south. After entering the grove He told those three disciples to remain there and keep watch. The second instruction we should adhere to is to remain watchful while waiting for Him.

There is a tendency for us to become complacent in our lives, never expecting Jesus to show up in any significant way. Yet He will! The writer of Hebrews puts it this way: *And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. (Hebrews 6:11-12)* When Jesus returned He found Peter, James and John asleep and rebuked them for it.

The third thing we are to do is to add **prayer** to our watching. Jesus said, "*Keep watching and praying.*" In the garden that night, Jesus sought His Father's will. And that is the kind of praying we should be doing. Some call this "praying in the Spirit". The "Apostle Paul alluded to this in his epistle to the Romans. *And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not*

³ Caves were especially suited for the preparation and storage of oil because they were warm in the winter and cool in the summer.

know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. (Romans 8:26-27)

Many times, we as Christians engage in prayer but aren't really expecting God to respond, so we just go ahead and do what we were already planning to do. Or we will pray when we go to bed and then just drift off to sleep. Jesus admonished the disciples to watch and pray so they wouldn't fall into temptation. Doing things our own way or going to sleep are but just two extremes of falling into temptation. The reason we are to remain awake and alert is to see what the Lord's **reply** will be.

Jesus also prayed **three** times to the Father regarding the same issue ... could what He was preparing to go through be done another way? Jesus was a man of faith. He was use to having His prayers answered. He believed that he would receive what He asked for. Concerning prayer, Christians should remember that when we ask God for something we are to believe we have received our request⁴. It also appears that it is appropriate to ask God for same thing three times. This principle is borne out by the fact that the Apostle Paul, like Jesus also prayed about an issue three times⁵.

Again Jesus returned and found the three disciples asleep so He gave them another instruction. "*Rise and pray.*" The fourth thing we can learn about waiting for the Lord is that when we become weary we should rise or stand to our feet while we pray. This demonstrates our preparedness to act on whatever the Lord tells us to do.

As the disciples prepared to rise Jesus issued His final instruction "*Arise, let us be going.*" The last thing we learn about waiting on the Lord is that once He instructs us on what to do or what direction to take, as Christians we should immediately do what He says.

Group Discussion:

3. How does the Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1- 13) compare with what Jesus taught His disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane that night?

The Point of the Lesson:

Waiting for the Lord to act involves active participation.

- It requires us to be restful, not busy and not sleeping.
- It requires us to be watchful.
- It requires us to be prayerful, seeking God's will.
- It requires us to be prepared to act.
- It requires us to immediately respond to Him.

Application:

Use this outline the next time you are waiting for the Lord to do something.

⁴ "Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you." (Mark 11:24)

⁵ 2 Corinthians 12:8 (refer to lesson 41)