

TAKEAWAY:

Even Jesus experienced human emotions/pressure. Trusting God involves prayer, dependence, and surrender.

INTRODUCTION QUESTIONS:

- When you face a difficult situation, what is your first instinct—to solve it yourself, avoid it, or bring it to God?
- What is one situation where you felt overwhelmed, and who or what did you turn to for support during that time?

UNDERSTANDING:

Have a group member read Luke 22:39-46

- How did this sermon help you better understand this passage of scripture? Is there anything that was mentioned during the sermon that stuck out to you?
- Jesus prayed so earnestly that His sweat became like drops of blood. What does this teach us about honest prayer in times of struggle?
- Jesus prayed, "Not my will, but yours be done." Why is it so hard to pray this prayer? Share a time when God's will led you through difficulty but resulted in growth.
- How have you experienced God's strength meeting you in a moment of weakness or vulnerability?

APPLICATION:

- What prevents us from bringing our real struggles to God in prayer? How can we be more authentic in our prayer lives?
- Identify one area of stress/personal struggle and practice surrendering it to God in prayer daily.
- How can you share your faith, even in difficult situations with others in your workplace, neighborhood, school, family, etc.?

GO DEEPER:

The Go Deeper section has two potential functions. It can supplement your small group discussion by providing extra discussion material.

You can also use these sections as short devotionals to carry you through the week until your next group meeting and to deepen your study of our text from this week. Here are two "Going Deeper" discussion prompts that build upon the above provided questions without repeating them:

The Mystery of the Cup: In verse 42, Jesus asks the Father to remove 'this cup.' Throughout history, many of Jesus' followers have faced torture and death with songs of joy and apparent fearlessness. If Jesus was merely afraid of the physical pain of the cross, it would seem He had less courage than many of the martyrs who came after Him. Therefore, the 'cup' must contain something far worse than physical death.

- Read Isaiah 51:17-23 and Jeremiah 25:15-29.
- Based on your readings what is "the cup" a metaphor for in the Hebrew Scriptures?
- How does understanding "the cup" as spiritual judgment (not merely physical pain) deepen your gratitude for what happened in Gethsemane?
- How does this explain why Jesus was "sorrowful to the point of death"?
- Compared to the suffering of the martyrs, how is Jesus' suffering unique?

Living a Surrendered Life: Jesus prayed, "Not my will, but yours be done." He exemplifies here that even for him, and how much more for us, it is possible to desire something contrary to God's will but still wisely choose what God wants. For Jesus, the contrast was his human desire for self-preservation versus the Triune plan of God that was in place since the foundation of the earth—namely, redemption and new creation. His surrender and subsequent obedience wasn't the absence of a contrary desire to God's will but rather the denial of this desire; his struggle exemplifies to us the choice of acting against real driving forces in our life like fear, anxiety, etc.

- Have you ever prayed "not my will be done but God's," when you wanted to choose your way and not God's? How did that go for you? What about vis versa, when you chose contrary to what you knew God wanted for you? How did that go for you? Do you now see the latter as part of God working all things together for good—that is, your conformity to the image of the Son (Rom 8:28)?
- Being spiritually mature doesn't mean we always want the right thing; rather, it means choosing the right thing despite wanting the wrong thing (or the easier thing). Read and discuss the parable of the two sons (Matt 21:28-32). How did Jesus intend this parable to be understood in his day? What meaning might it have for your individual life?
- The prayer of "not my will ..." is our participation in Jesus's Gethsemane work, our sanctification process of the death of the old human being and the resurrection of the new human being, the rising of the new creation human being and the death of the old.
- Read Matt 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23; 14:27 within their context. What does it mean to "take up your cross"? In the context of Jesus' time, the cross was a tool of execution and shame; how does that original meaning inform your understanding today? In what aspects of your own life do you find it most challenging to "deny yourself" and follow Christ? How does this teaching challenge modern cultural values such as self-fulfillment, personal comfort, and the pursuit of happiness?

The call in Luke 9:23 specifies “daily.” What does “daily” discipleship look like practically in your routine, as opposed to a one-time decision or an occasional commitment?

- Discuss the above thoughts in light of our culture’s popular saying “You do you, I’ll do me” and its implications in terms of ethics (e.g., creating our own morality), being tolerant or intolerant of others, and loving others in the midst of our differences.

Quotes:

- “At Gethsemane: “Jesus is subordinating His loudest desires to His deepest desires.” Tim Keller
- “Here more clearly than anywhere the purpose of prayer becomes plain: not to make God do my will (which is practicing magic), but to bring my will into line with his (which is what it means to practice true religion).” J. I Packer
- “Jesus is in a garden, not of delight as the first Adam, where he lost himself and the whole human race, but in one of agony, where He saved Himself and the whole human race.” Blaise Pascal
- “Never do we see a man fear death like this man! ... He felt the full force of the wrath of God against sin, which no other man ever felt or could feel.” Martin Luther
- “He stands before us peerless in misery. None are molested by the powers of evil as He was... As if the powers of hell had given commandment to their legions, ‘Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the King himself.’” Charles Spurgeon

PRAYER:

Pray for each person's specific struggles and for the faith to surrender them to God's will, trusting His strength.