

**"Passionate Prayers of Our Savior**

**1. In the Garden – Luke 22:39-46**

INI

To the pilgrims of Ascension Lutheran Church, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

**PRAY: Lord sanctify us by Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen.**

**Luke 22:39–46 (NKJV)**

- 39 Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him.*
- 40 When He came to the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation."*
- 41 And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed,*
- 42 saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."*
- 43 Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.*
- 44 And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*
- 45 When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow.*
- 46 Then He said to them, "Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation."*

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

**PRAY: Dear heavenly Father, upon seeing our spiritual slumbers, You in Your grace and mercy took the cup of wrath we deserve and placed it in the hands of Your Son. Knowing the cup of wrath has been taken away, make us now to drink from the cup of Your blessing. For His sake, bless our meditation. Work in us spiritual alertness today and throughout this holy season to hear Your Word, to believe Your Word, and to call upon Your Word in every trouble. We know this is Your will, in Jesus name. Amen.**

As you compare Matthew and Mark's account, you may notice how, although all the disciples sleep, Jesus singles out Peter. From Mark's account: *Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."* (Mark 14:37–38) Peter was a confident Christian. He said boldly, "Lord I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death." But his words would not be so. *Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.* (1 Corinthians 10:12).

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Just prior to our text, Jesus warns Peter, "Simon, Simon! Satan has asked for you all, that he may sift you as wheat." And He warns us too. Satan is desperately designing spiritual attacks that he might "sift you." That is, they are designed to separate the unwanted chaff from the true grain. He endeavors to separate you from the assembly of Christ, to get you singled out where he can lull you to sleep.

Our spiritual slumbers often overtake because of a false sense of self-confidence. Like Peter, we think things are just as they should be. We are organized. We've got it together. Work, family – it is not perfect, but we've got it under control. Yes, we are ready – to go with the Lord, to do His will, even to face suffering and death with Him. Oh how drowsiness clouds about us. We begin to lose awareness of several things. We forget our own sinful flesh which is always corrupt; we lose awareness of the siftings of Satan. We forget that Satan is after the confident Christian, to sift us.

***46 Then He said to them, "Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation."***

What is it that keeps us from praying? Is it that things just don't seem that bad? The disciples are merely taking a nap. It is not as if they are being lazy. We read, v.45, "He found them sleeping because of sorrow." They were rightly stressed; afraid; sorrowful at the thought of their beloved Lord leaving them. A little rest was only natural.

There are countless examples of things in our daily life that are naturally important. There are countless examples of why we forget to pray or don't want to pray. There are countless examples of how, even when we do pray, we pray only about temporal things, neglecting the more important spiritual needs. There are countless examples of how, when we do pray about spiritual things, our lips move, but our mind and heart are elsewhere.

Martin Luther wrote extensively on the importance of daily prayer. He writes, "People who are experienced in spiritual matters have said that no labor is comparable to the labor of praying. For to pray is not to recite a number of psalms or to roar in churches, as monks usually do, but to have serious thoughts by which the soul establishes a fellowship between him who prays and Him who hears the prayers and determines with certainty that although we are miserable sinners, God will be gracious, mitigate the punishments and answer our petitions."

**PRAY: Faithful Lord, we again and again grow spiritually drowsy. Awaken us by the passionate prayers and alert work of our Savior.**

So why have we not been sifted and blown away with chaff.

***42 "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."***

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We read from Matthew and Mark how Jesus in fact makes this request three times. On the one hand He knew what needed to be done, and the other hand He did not.

According to His human nature, Jesus had to face this test as a man. He could not use His divine foreknowledge to determine the outcome. By truly asking if it was possible to remove the cup of suffering, He had to truly obey the will of His Father. "...not My will, but Yours, be done." This does not contradict the Father's will or the plan of salvation. In fact it fulfills the Father's plan.

*who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, (Hebrews 5:7-9)*

This is where the "passionate prayers of our Savior" find their richest meaning. The word "passion" means "to suffer." We see the Son of God setting aside His divine power ... We see Him setting aside His divine right to abandon the path to the cross and condemn this sinful world ... We see His real agony, His distress, His anguish ... We see Him "praying earnestly" that this cup of wrath which He in no way deserves be taken away ... We see Him laboring in prayer to the point where it appears He experiences "hematidrosis" as drops of blood fall from His face ...

Now we see. We see how deep this sacrifice of love really was. We see a Father who loves you so much that rather than granting the request of His perfect and beloved Son, He sends Him to face hell in your stead.

And Jesus goes. While we sleep, He does not. While we sin, He does not. While we enter into temptation and fall, He remains righteously devoted to the will of His Father. He had to go it alone. None of us could help Him. He was the only One who could empty the cup that was filled with our sins.

Yes the cup has been taken. Yes, forgiveness is yours. And yes, we have a Father who has counted us not as chaff, but as valuable grain.

**PRAY: Dear heavenly Father, in the alertness of Your saving grace, we see the cup of wrath taken from us and given to Your Son. Mercifully grant now that we would trust this and so drink of the cup of blessing that remains eternally ours.**

Jesus was alone, so that you would never be. Peter was not left alone; nor are we. *I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.* (Luke 22:32). Our Savior prays for us. *For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, (1 Timothy 2:5)*

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Prayer so valuable because in it we return to Jesus, to the One who makes us acceptable to the Father, the One who strengthens us, the One who delivers us from all evil.

*Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me." (Psalm 50:15)*

Prayer done in Jesus saving name, always glorifies God and always delivers. Let's be passionate pray-ers. Let us call upon the LORD as we labor over sin. Let us be passionately alert to our weaknesses and in passionate confidence demand that our Lord grant us every good spiritual thing. And He does. Spiritual requests are not "if-y" prayers.

*What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? (Romans 8:31-32)*

God has emptied the cup of wrath. What remains? What remains but to give us of the cup of His blessing? And He does so freely. However let us not forget – prayer is not the cup of blessing. Prayer is a one-way street, us to God. Prayer only asks.

We drink of God's blessings when we are baptized, when we hear His Word, when we receive the cup of the New Covenant in His blood.

The Father's response to Jesus' prayer was to send Him an angel. That is literally – a messenger. The Father's response to your prayers is the same – to send a messenger. Who are the messengers that God sends to us? A pastor? A fellow Christian?

The message of the gospel is God's answer to our troubles. It is the clear message of Law and Gospel, which awakens us, alerts us, makes us aware of our weaknesses. It is the joy of the gospel that leads us away from temptation.

Let's be passionate pray-ers. Let us ask, yea, demand that we would the promises of God would be ours. But how can we call upon God to keep His promises if we don't know what they are. Let us study the Word that we would know these gifts of Christ that have been promised to us. In this knowledge we call upon God in greater and greater confidence that our sins are forgiven and that God will deliver us from all evil.

*For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:15-16).*

Prayer is hard work. A confident Christians has no need to pray? A confident Christian has every need to pray.

**PRAY: Dear gracious Father, for Jesus sake, give us confidence to call upon You daily. Keep us alert to the temptations of Satan and deliver us from them. Give us faith to**

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**see our Savior praying to You for our salvation. As You have promised, so do, that You would be glorified. Amen.**