

## Jesus in Gethsemane: The Praying Victorious Man (Part 2)

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Yesterday in my session, we were in Mark's gospel, chapter 14. We're going to look at Luke's account this evening, of our Lord in Gethsemane; Jesus in Gethsemane. Luke 22:39-46, follow with me: "And He came out and went - notice this - as was His custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed Him." I like that phrase too. Are you a disciple of Jesus? Then just follow Him, just follow Him all the days of your life, follow the lamb whithersoever He goeth. They just followed. They got this right. "The disciples followed Him. And when He came to the place (Luke calls it "the place"), He said to them, 'Pray that you may not enter into temptation.' " Now let me just comment briefly because I'm not going to preach on this aspect, but this is important: Jesus was not only praying for Himself in Gethsemane, He told the disciples several times, "Pray that you not enter into temptation." And He taught them over these three years, "Pray in this way: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Pray." So He's not only praying for Himself, He is modeling and teaching them, setting before their eyes, what it means to endure in prayer in the most difficult time.

This had to ring loud and clear in their hearts because He's fixed in to be wrought upon by Roman soldiers. He calls it the hour of darkness. The disciples flee (they're going to be restored), but would not later our Lord saying to them, "Pray that you not enter into temptation," would this not have rung in their consciences and in their ears? "Pray," He says in verse 40, "that you may not enter into temptation. And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying, 'Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me. Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done.' And there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And when He rose from prayer, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow. And He said to them, 'Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.' "

Yesterday we saw Jesus the Broken Man in Mark 14. Here in Luke, we see Jesus the Praying Victorious Man. Some anonymous hymn writer or poet wrote these words: "When God wants to drill a man, and thrill a man, and skill a man; when God wants to mold a man to play the noblest part; when He yearns with all His Heart to create so great and bold a man that all the world should be amazed, watch His methods, watch His ways! How He ruthlessly perfects whom He royally elects! How He hammers him and hurts him, and with mighty blows converts him

into trial shapes of clay which only God understands; while his tortured heart is crying and he lifts beseeching hands! How he bends but never breaks when his good He undertakes; How He uses whom He chooses, and with every purpose fuses him; By every act induces him to try His splendor out -- God knows what He's about!"

The Father knew, in His servant the man Christ Jesus, what He was about. The Father knows what He's doing in guiding the man Jesus as He did, His whole earthly life. The Holy Spirit, three years earlier, poured out upon Him in the Jordan river mightily. And then the Bible says the Spirit led Him, drove Him into the wilderness for forty days, to be tempted by the devil. The Spirit was always leading Him, showing Him, teaching Him, impressing Him. And here, the Father's purpose is unfolding as He brings Jesus through Gethsemane. He knows what He's about. He has to go through Gethsemane, both physically and spiritually, to get to the cross.

Luke's gospel really has been called The Gospel of Prayer, because Luke traces Jesus' prayer life more than any other. Luke traces Jesus' teaching on prayer more than any other. For instance, Jesse took us this morning, at the end of his message, to Luke 11 & 18. Only Luke gives those parables on prayer, the Lord's teaching on prayer. Only Luke records that the disciples asked the Lord, "Teach us to pray." And so it's about Jesus praying. Primarily, this Gethsemane experience, the gospel writers are showing us Jesus having to pray, His being driven through this difficulty to prayer.

Now what is He praying about? Well, Jesus calls it the hour – "Let this hour pass..." He calls it what else? A cup – "If it's possible, let this cup pass from Me." The cup. Several times you read the gospels, particularly John, Jesus at different times says, "Mine hour is not yet come." But then finally He comes to the place, He says, "Father, the hour is here; My hour is here." And here, He is coming to Gethsemane, and He's dreading the hour, He wants it to pass. And He addresses this cup. The cup.

So, first, we must see, we're going to see His cup, His praying, His resignation, His victory, His Help that comes. But let's begin by seeing His cup. Verse 42 in our text, He begins to pray about this, and He says, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me. Let it pass. Let this cup pass." Now what's the cup about? Well, the cup is a symbolic term in both the Old and New Testaments about full identification with something, about deeply experiencing something, where you partake of it, and it becomes part of you. And the cup is not always used in an unfavorable way, it's used in a favorable way. For instance, Psalm 16:5, the psalmist says: "The LORD is my portion and my cup." Psalm 23, the psalmist says: "Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup overflows." Psalm 116:12, David says:

"What can I render to the LORD for all His benefits to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD." Jeremiah speaks of the cup of consolation, comfort (Jeremiah 16:7).

So it's used in a positive way. It's used in a positive way in the New Testament, which we'll refer to in a moment. But the contrary is true: it's just as much, and perhaps, more used in an unfavorable negative way, symbolizing what? Divine judgment; God's wrath; God's displeasure. For instance, Psalm 75:8 says, "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 drink it down to the dregs." That means every drop. They're going to drink down of the cup of God's wrath. Isaiah, in chapter 51, cries out, "Wake yourself, wake yourself, you who have drunk from the the LORD the cup of His wrath, the cup of staggering" (Isaiah 51:17). Ezekiel prophesies, "The LORD says to Jerusalem, 'The nakedness of your whoredom shall be uncovered, and you will drink your sister's cup (that was Samaria); you'll drink your sister's cup, for it contains much, a horror and desolation; you will drink it down fully the cup of the LORD' " (Ezekiel 16). Habakkuk warns Israel that the vicious Chaldeans will cause Israel to drink a cup; and he says, "You will have your fill of shame instead of glory. Drink, yourself! The cup in the LORD's right hand will come around to you, and utter shame will come upon you!" (Habakkuk 2:16).

The cup in the New Testament symbolizes, really, three realities. Number one, grace and salvation. Number two, suffering - the suffering of the saints and the suffering of Jesus Christ. And three, the cup of divine wrath. Now think about these realities. Remember 1 Corinthians 15, Paul, by revelation (he wasn't there when the Lord Jesus did it), but by revelation he says, "It was revealed to me from the Lord, that the Lord Jesus on that night that He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks He broke it and said, 'This is My body.' In the same way, He took the what? the cup." And only Paul says this of Jesus' words: "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This cup, you are to drink. Now all drink from it, drink all of it. This cup is the new covenant in My blood." So the cup in the New Testament does represent grace, salvation, forgiveness, participation in the New Covenant, union and communion with Jesus Christ. The cup of blessing, Paul says, is this not communion of Christ?

But another meaning Jesus puts on it is, when He talks about the believer's suffering He calls it a cup. For instance, in Matthew 20, remember sweet mother of James and John, the sons of thunder? She has the audacity and the courage and the importunity to go to Jesus and ask what? She wants to go lobby for something: "Lord, I just have a little request. Could my two sons sit on Your right hand and on Your left in Your kingdom?" How did Jesus reply to that? what did He say? Those

guys were standing there (the sons), because He turns to them, and you remember what He says to them? Are you able to drink the cup that I'm going to drink? And what did they say? "Lord, we are able." And what did Jesus say back to them? "You will drink this cup"-- speaking of their coming suffering and martyrdom.

Well, Jesus takes the symbol of the cup, and He uses it to refer, here in the garden, to, specifically, His unique passion and suffering and death. The cup of all cups, ultimately in its fullest meaning, is Christ's alone. This is His cup. No one has ever drunk from this cup. No one will ever drink the cup that Jesus Christ had to drink. Matthew 26, He says, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." Luke 22, "Father, if You're willing, please remove this cup from Me." So the cup here is about that which is in the cup: full participation, full experience, of the contents of the cup that the Father was going to have Him drink, immediately in these hours right before Him. For us, the cup is grace and salvation; but for Him, it's extreme suffering and death and agony. His cup. Have you praised Him lately for drinking the cup for you? for taking the cup for you? Sometimes we say, "Lord Jesus, thank You for dying for me." And we should. Brethren, this cup started in Gethsemane. Have you ever praised Him for being there for you and doing that for you, taking your cup, so you would never have to drink this cup?

And then we see, here in this account, not only His cup, but His praying. Matthew, Mark, and Luke, all highlight His praying in the garden. Matthew records, unlike Mark and Luke, that there were three private seasons of prayer that Jesus had in the garden. The twelve come in with Him to the garden; Jesus calls further in, the three; and then He withdraws from them, and He goes on, and He's alone. He says, "Sit here while I go pray." And Matthew alone says He had three real seasons of prayer. We don't know how long they lasted. He goes and prays, He comes back to them; He goes and prays, He comes back; He goes a third time and He prays. Now Luke's account, the reason I wanted us to read tonight and see Luke's account, is because Luke adds two things: one, that He prayed in agony - in agony He's praying. And Luke records: "an angel comes." You remember another time angels came for Him? When? Three years earlier - forty days in the wilderness. He's weak, He's hungry; angels come. There may have been other times, we don't know, but Luke alone tells us an angel comes. More on that later.

His praying truly is in view here. All His earthly ministry sprang out of prayer, was the fruit of prayer. Private prayer was central. And Luke is the gospel of prayer. Luke alone says that when Jesus was baptized: "When He was baptized and He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit was poured out upon Him." Luke 6:12 says, "Then He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." Have you ever been to an all-night prayer meeting in any sense of an all-night prayer meeting? It's quite an experience. "He went out

and continued all night in prayer." You remember what He did the next day? He officially chose the twelve apostles. Why did He pray all night? He wanted to get it right. He wanted to hear from His Father. He could have been praying a long time: He might have been praying through a list of forty people, we don't know, that's conjecture. It's not coincidental that He spent the whole night in prayer to choose the twelve that the Father showed Him to choose.

Luke 9:18 says that He did the same thing, you don't have to turn there, I'll go back to it. Luke 9:18 says this: "Now it happened that as He was praying alone, the disciples were with Him." Now that sounds like a contradiction - He's praying alone, the disciples were with Him. They're out here somewhere, they're with Him, but He's alone. And when He had finished praying, "He asked them, 'Who do the crowds say that I am?' " He's praying. Luke 11:1, "When He had finished praying, the disciples come, 'Lord, teach us to pray.'" Luke says that when Jesus took the three on the mount of transfiguration, they went there for the purpose of prayer. He went there to pray. Matthew doesn't say that, Mark doesn't say that. But here in Gethsemane, it's such prayer that especially stands out.

I want you to turn to Hebrews 5:7 and look at that, because Hebrews 5:7 sums it up. And some think it particularly is especially referring to the garden; others think it includes that, but it's more of a bigger picture of the years of His earthly ministry, we don't know for sure. What we do know is what Hebrews 5:7 says is true. Look what it says: "In the days of His flesh, He offered up prayers (plural) and supplications (plural)." So, what did He do? The man Jesus, all His earthly life and ministry, He's praying to His Father; He's making supplication; He's crying out of a pure heart; He's turning His Heart and His thoughts, He's uttering His voice and His cries to His Father who is always hearing Him, always pleased with Him. Always maintaining communion. The Holy Spirit taught the boy, and the young man, and the man Jesus, how to pray. He increased in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man. So what is He doing? Jesus is offering up prayers, supplications. How? It tells us, "with loud cries (plural) and tears (plural)." Let me ask you a question: have you ever prayed with tears? have you ever heard anyone pray with loud cries? It's scary. You want to think, is that demonic? Is the person mentally unstable? What's going on? This person is either off and in the flesh, or they're in tune with God.

I was in Romania one time with a group of men. We were there about ten days. One evening, after dinner, we were going to have a little prayer meeting in one of our rooms. We were gonna pray for about 15 minutes. We started praying, and one of the men started groaning. He couldn't say anything but groan. And then in trembling, he started saying, "Father, O Father, O God." And he went on like that for 5 minutes, and the Spirit of God filled that room, and there were loud, deep

cries and intercession. And it seemed like a brief time. And when we finished, we realized two hours had passed. This is what was experienced by our Lord Jesus Christ. Can you imagine hearing Him pray with loud cries? What did He say? Did the disciples hear Him, we don't know. They had to have heard Him in the times that He prayed this way if they were a little ways at a distance. A holy hush would have fallen over them. They would have felt uncomfortable; perhaps, some of them embarrassed. They knew nothing of this ground, this holy ground, wherein their Savior was praying like no man had ever prayed. Earnest prayer. Zealous prayers. Transparent praying. Desperate, dependent praying.

He prayed in the days of His flesh, Hebrews says, with loud cryings and tears, to who? - not to Himself - to Him who was able, the text says; to His Father who is in heaven; our Father who art in heaven. Jesus never said "Dear God." He never said "Lord." He might have referred, quoting scripture, but we don't know always, perfectly, how He addressed the Father in prayer because not all of His prayers are recorded. But we do know His recorded prayers in the gospels, isn't He always saying "Father, Father, I know that You always hear Me. Father. Holy Father." He prayed unto Him who was able to keep Him through death, through this hour of darkness, through this hour of trial, all the way through. Hebrews 12:1 says, "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame." And it was His cries to the Father, and it was the sustaining aid of the Holy Spirit upon Him, that enabled Him to cry effectually; and it preserved Him. And the result was, Hebrews 5:7 says, "And He was heard because of His godly fear - His reverence, His piety - His godly fear."

His Gethsemane praying was different. He's driven to this, into desperate agonizing cries in prayer. And even what we read here, He's just addressing His Father. And isn't it interesting that by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, God makes sure the disciples pen His very prayers. It's like the Lord Jesus saying, "Matthew, Mark, Luke, make sure you express what I was really feeling and what I said there." They record His prayers, and it was just simple, desperate, childlike praying. He didn't get fancy. Sometimes the most powerful prayers is a cry, it's a groan. The Spirit of God takes our groanings and makes intercession, and prays for us according to the will of God. We don't know how to pray; sometimes all we can do is just groan and say, "Father."

Two years ago when I was here on Sunday night, after the conference I got very very sick for six hours. And I was so sick all I could do was lay down, and I was hurting so bad. And I remember the main thing, in my agony, in my pain, I just said, "O God, help. Jesus help me." That was all I could muster. That's all we have to muster, beloved. Remember Peter? "Peter," Jesus says, "come to Me on the water." Peter goes, and it says he begins to sink. Peter didn't pray "O God of Abraham,

Isaac and Jacob. O Thou that madest the heavens, the earth, and the seas. You know all things Lord, and You being omniscient and omnipotent and omnipresent, You can see that I'm sinking here." He just cried out, "Help! Lord, help me, I'm sinking." And Jesus reached out His hand and raised him up. What a picture that would have been. What power! The man Jesus, think of it, pulls a big fisherman, grabs his hand and pulls him up out of the water into the boat. Peter just cried in his desperation.

Jesus was praying real and desperate prayers. What did He pray here? You combine Matthew, Mark, and Luke, His prayers that are recorded, He says, "Father, if You're willing, remove this cup from Me." Now that's real, honest praying. Did our Lord Jesus Christ not know all along? From the time He was 12, He was receiving this messianic consciousness that He had a Father about whose business He was to be about. "Must I not be about My Father's business?" This messianic consciousness is growing on Him, until when He's 30 - it's time, and He knows His calling. He knew He was called to die. He knew He was called to be the Lamb. He knew, and He told the disciples throughout those three years: "The Son of Man will be betrayed. He must go to Jerusalem, and be betrayed by their scribes and elders, to be tried and beaten and crucified. And on the third day He'll rise." He knew, but here He's facing it. And in simplicity, and in single focus, you know, one of the keys of praying if you're around others, when you pray forget everybody around you - you have an audience of one. Just pray to your Father. Jesus said, "Just pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who is in secret will reward you openly."

Jesus simply cried out, "Father, if You're willing, remove this cup from Me. Let this cup pass from Me." He prayed, "If it's possible, let this hour pass from Me." He prayed, "Abba, Father." And remember, that term "abba" in Romans 8 and here, is used not in the context of great, flippant, happy, joyful, cheap talk and cheap intimacy; it's in the context of suffering. He prayed, "Abba, Father, all things are possible with Thee. Remove this cup from Me." Isn't there mystery? The Son knew He had to drink the cup; it was the Father's absolute perfect will for the Son to drink the cup; and they had perfect harmony and union and love; and yet the Son in His humanity is saying, "Father, this cup, please remove it from Me. My Father, let this cup pass from Me; yet nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will. Not My will, but Yours, be done. My Father, if this cup cannot pass unless I drink it, Your will be done." And Matthew says He prayed the same words three times in earnest. He was doing what, they used to say, He was praying through -- meaning He was going to win this battle on His knees. He was going to gain this victory. He was going to embrace this cup, and part of that was being so honest in prayer about His battle and His struggle in His Heart, and what He really felt. He told the Father exactly what He felt and desired and wanted, and He didn't fear doing that, but then He resigned and He yielded to the Father's purpose.

It is hard sometimes to yield to the will of God when it's difficult, but our Savior had to do it. He's your model in this. He's our example. He was laboring in prayer for Himself. Gethsemane was the place for Jesus, where all that was earthly and human, now is out of reach. All that's human is completely useless and had broken down, and in a sense, it had turned to ashes. And hope didn't have one foothold to stand on. And in such an hour, there is a perishing of everything, unless the soul waits in desperate desperation on God alone. That's what Jesus is doing. The disciples can't help Him; the crowds can't help Him; no one can help Him but His Father. Psalm 62, the psalmist said twice, "For God alone my soul waits in silence." - this is Jesus.

Someone said, "When you're shipwrecked on God and stranded on omnipotence, it is so scary and so risky and so radical, but God is there. And then you don't need a man, you don't need human help, you're shut up to God." You know, our life is really shaped by who we cry out to, isn't it? Is it family, or friend, or pastor, or God, primarily, that you go to first when you're needy? If you cry out to people first, you're asking people to do what only God can do.

God has put His son alone in the garden, and only God can help Him. We must be weaned off of dependence on man. This has been a hard lesson for me. We must learn first to cry out to the One who will never turn a deaf ear to us. He will never turn a deaf ear to your cries, and He alone is the One who has the power and the willingness to meet your need in your darkest hour. Think of this, if men can only help us partially with limited resources and wisdom, and God can help us 24/7 completely with unlimited resources and love and wisdom, then why would we ever depend on man rather than God? You see, we have to be taught, and we have to be through the crucible and the experience, when no one can take your place, and no one can fully go through it with you. You know, if you have a major serious surgery, or you have serious cancer, your husband, your wife, they are there with you, they are loving you, they are supporting you; but listen, you're going through it alone still, because they ain't got it, you got it. No one knows the deep experience of a hard depression except the soul going through it or the one who has been through it. Jesus is going through it, and He's praying in the garden because He is shut up to His Father.

Well, let me hurry on. His cup. His praying. And then thirdly, this is amazing, look in Luke 22:43, what does it say? "And there appeared..." -- the idea is, suddenly he shows up. Who shows up? an angel. Stay with me now, "There appeared an angel from heaven, strengthening Him." His cup, His praying, His angelic help. Do you know angels have helped you and you don't even know it? "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who are the heirs of salvation?" Angels have helped you, and you didn't know it. You may know



sometime when an angel has helped, but many times probably Christians have been helped by angels and they didn't know it. You don't need to know it -- you'd either get scared or you'd start worshiping the angel, so you don't need to know when an angel has helped you.

An angel, His angelic help comes. Jesus' prayers were answered by an angel. Now that's a blessed angel. The angels, before the creation of the world, were in existence. These creatures, heavenly creatures, created to worship around the throne, do Jehovah's bidding, sent on universal errands, doing whatever they're told to do. They are around the throne - the cherubims and the seraphims - six wings: with one they'll cover their eyes, with one they'll do this, with two they'll do that. Strange creatures, these angels, heavenly bidding they're doing. This one, the Father had to have said, "You go, go to Him. It's your assignment, go. You go help Him. You go minister to Him." That angel, what joy would have risen in his heart: "I get, I get to go?" He got to go. This angel goes. This fortunate messenger wings his way to earth, to Israel. He comes down. He doesn't need a GPS. He doesn't need to go to maps to find it, He knows where to go. Was he one of the ones in the wilderness that came? We don't know about this one, but we know this: he was a fortunate messenger. He was a blessed minister from heaven. This angel, think about it, this angel knew the Savior. The Savior had created him - because all things were created through Jesus Christ, right? He's the agent of creation, Colossians says, Hebrews 1 says. The angel had been made by Him. And now this creature, made by His Creator who is prostrate in the garden, he gets to go minister to Him. The angel had worshiped Christ the Son in eternity. He had adored Him.

The angel is sent, the Father says, "Go, go to your Lord." So the angel has come. He appears, he shows up, he approaches the Lord. I don't know if they land, but he shows up, he's there, he's on the ground. Was he visible? we don't know. Did he come in the form of a (whatever form an angel is in), did he come in the form of a man? we don't know. But he approaches the Lord Jesus, and his heart would have been in awe - angels feel too. He would have thought, "O the Lord of glory, lowly lying in tears, how can I help Him? what can I do for Him?" Was the angel trembling? Was he saying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts"? We don't know what he was saying or thinking or feeling, but he does something. Luke says the angel came and ministered to Him, strengthened Him. How did he do that? Did he touch Him on the shoulder? Did he put his hand (if he had a hand), did he put his wing on His head? Did he sit down by Him? Did he touch Him, did he lift Him up, did he talk to Him, did he speak tenderly to Him? We don't know, but he strengthened Him; he ministered to Him. Whatever he said or did, it ministered this: "Savior, You'll make it! You're going to make it! You're not forgotten in

heaven. We're for You. For the joy that's before You, keep on. You're gonna make it all the way through. This is Your hour, You're going to endure it all the way."

An angel ministered to Him, and that was an answer to prayer. We don't know how the Lord is going to answer our prayers at times when we're so needy. The Savior, it's not said that He asked for an angel, but the Father's way at that moment was not to remove the cup, but to send supernatural strength to help Him embrace the cup. And after this, you know what He does? He resigns Himself to the Father's purpose. However dark, however hard, however grotesque, however painful, the Son resigns. He says, "Yet nevertheless, not My will, but Thine, be done." Listen, that one prayer, that one choice, was part of His qualifying to be your High Priest. That one choice was part of His accomplishing our salvation. That one prayer "Father, not My will, but Yours, be done" was part of His finishing His work that the Father had given Him to do.

The hymn says, "Thy way, not mine, however dark it be. Lead me by Thine own hand. Choose Thou the path for me. Smooth let it be, or rough, it will still be the best. Winding or straight, it leads right onward to Thy rest. I dare not choose my lot. I would not if I could. Choose Thou for me, my God, so shall I walk upright. Take Thou Thy cup, and with it, joy or sorrow, fill. As best to Thee may seem, choose Thou my good or ill. Not mine, not mine the choice, in things both small and great. Be Thou, my God, my strength, my wisdom, my all."

Listen beloved, like the Lord Jesus Christ, your resignation, your choices, your obedience through tears, through agony, through heartbreak, matters. Your yieldedness matters. Your choosing to be full of the Spirit of God and walk in the Spirit matters. It determines your next course. Our consecration is vital and is essential. Our usefulness and our full obedience supremely matters. As it did in the Savior's life here, so it does in yours.

Finally, think about not only His cup, and His praying, and His resignation; think about His victory. Look down in Luke 22 verse 45: "When He rose from prayer (this was the final time), He came to His disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, and He said to them, 'Why are you sleeping?' or, 'Are you still sleeping?' " And then what does He say? "Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation." Matthew and Mark record: "He came and said, 'Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.'" When Jesus came out of Gethsemane, have you ever noticed how in control He was? He's there, the guards come, the Romans come, Judas comes; and they march in, it's the hour of darkness; Jesus is never out of control, He's in control. The soldiers fall when He says, "I am." He tells Peter to put up his sword; the disciples flee; He goes on trial. He's in control. He's ruling the moments. He's not in a sense the passive one, He is actively controlling everything,

all the way to the cross. His victory is certain because Gethsemane yielded its fruits.

Now let me give you three closing thoughts for you, that I hope will help and strengthen you real briefly. Number one, resignation to God's purposes and His sanctifying providences is often difficult. You know that. Some of God's dealings with us produce grief and sorrow, not joy. Peter said that, didn't he? James said that. "For the present time, no trial seems joyful but grievous, but afterward it produces - what? - peaceable fruit of righteousness if you're exercised by it." Resignation to God's purpose, His disciplines, His chastenings, and His sanctifying providences are often difficult and hard. And it doesn't mean you're out of God's will, it means you're smack-dab in the middle of God's will.

Secondly, desperate prayer and dependent faith is the only thing that will preserve you through those circumstances often. Not the manipulation of man, not the wisdom of man, not trying to figure out how you can get out of it. Desperate prayer, dependent faith, will preserve you through all your circumstances. Why? because God causes all things to work together for good to them who love God.

Thirdly, nothing ultimately will defeat the sons of God. It didn't defeat the Son of God, and nothing you face is going to defeat you as a child of God. End of Romans 8 says, "Nothing. Nothing." Paul names things - he thinks everything he can think of - and then he comes up with some terms that include everything else, and finally he comes to the end and he can't think of any other words. And he says "Nothing will be able to separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

John Newton wrote a hymn, he wrote a lot more than Amazing Grace. There's a hymn; listen, some of you know it, some of you have never heard it; listen to this, it's titled I Asked The Lord: "I asked the Lord that I might grow in faith, and love, and every grace; that I might more of His salvation know, and seek, more earnestly, His face." Is that not the heart of a Christian? " 'Twas He who taught me thus to pray; and He, I trust, has answered prayer! But it has been in such a way as almost drove me to despair. I hoped that in some favorite hour, at once He'd answer my request; and by His love's constraining power, subdue my sins, and give me rest. Instead of this, He made me feel the hidden evils of my heart, and let the angry powers of hell assault my soul in every way. 'Lord, why is this,' I trembling cried, 'Will You pursue this worm to death?' 'Tis in this way,' the Lord replied, 'I answer prayer for grace and faith. These inward trials I employ, from self, and pride, to set thee free; and break thy schemes of earthly joy, that you may find your all in Me.'"

God knows what He's about with you, beloved, every one of you. He will perfect that which concerns you. So you know what you're to do? Through the

tears, through the heartache, persevere. John Bunyan said, "Perseverance is keeping one hand on the plough, while you wipe the tears away with the other." Press on. Persevere. Your Savior has trod this path, and He's calling you on, "Follow Me through Gethsemane; follow Me to Calvary; follow Me all the way to heaven. I will keep you, I'll preserve you, and I will sanctify to your soul every trial that falls from above." Jesus the broken man, Jesus the praying man, Jesus the victorious man. He's your Savior, and He's with you. Let's pray.

*Father, I know my words are so inadequate, so imperfect, so feeble. Lord, I pray You'd wash me and forgive me for the imperfections of this effort. But we thank You Lord beyond that, above that, that we have this record given to us for our instruction, for our edification, that we might follow You; that we might see the glory of our Savior. O Lord, bless Your word to our hearts. Cause us to love You and adore You and worship You more. May this make You more real to us than ever before, that we might, in time of need, draw near to a sympathizing Savior, who knows our weaknesses, who feels our sorrows, and who has special grace for us if we'll come. Thank You and blessed be Your name, in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*