TEXT: LUKE 22:39-46

INTRODUCTION:

1. With the theme this year of Now That I Am A Christian, as we seek to grow in Christ, we look for those things that will make us stronger.
2. Certainly one of the areas we need to work on is with our prayer life.
3. Towards the end of our last lesson, I mentioned Luke 9:51 where the sacred text says that Jesus steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.
4. The Lord was committed to follow through with God’s wondrous scheme of redemption. But even so, it does not mean that He did not dread what was ahead.
5. In the days and hours that led up to His crucifixion, it must have been very difficult.
6. Our Lord knew all too well what was about to transpire.
   Luke 9:22 “saying, ‘The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.’”
7. With His impending suffering, we read in John 14-16 an intimate discussion Jesus had with His disciples.
8. Even so, Jesus foretold the disciples:
   John 16:32 “Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.”
9. The 17th chapter of John then provides us with what would be more appropriately described as the Lord’s prayer.
10. Yes, we generally hear people speak of Matt. 6:9-13 as the Lord’s prayer. But it was an occasion where the Lord was teaching in the Sermon on the Mount a model or example in how to pray.
11. John 17 is a beautiful prayer as our Lord prayed to His Father in heaven.
12. To set the stage for our lesson, we open the 18th chapter of John and read these words:
   John 18:1 “When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered.”
13. Gethsemane, drawn from the Aramaic, was a term which literally meant “an oil press” or, “a place of oil presses.”
   1) It was located at the foot of the Mount of Olives just outside of the city of Jerusalem.
   2) It is believed that it was an area that was probably a sizable piece of ground surrounded probably by a wall which likely contained a number of olive trees.
   3) This garden was a favorite place of the Lord to pray; a fact known to Judas Iscariot who betrayed our Savior.
14. It is here, at the end of our Lord’s public ministry, that Scripture portrays one of the most heart rending passages in all of the New Testament. 

**Luke 22:39-46** “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.’”

15. There is a reason for looking at Luke’s rendering. 

1) Luke was a physician, and his perspective on this event helps to make us aware of the difficulty our Lord faced on this occasion. 

2) And in our efforts to be more like Jesus, we want to see how our Lord handled what was before Him. 

**DISCUSSION:**

**I. THE NEED TO PRAY.**

A. The first thing in facing difficulty is to remember to pray. 

1. The Lord knew, as should we, that there are situations we face which we cannot afford to face alone. 

2. **Rom. 8:31** “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” 

3. **Phil. 4:13** “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” 

4. **Heb. 13:5-6** “…For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’

6 So we may boldly say: ‘The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?’” 

5. Why would we want to face the fiery darts of Satan without the help of God? 

B. We need to be fortified by God so we can withstand what comes our way. 

1. That is exactly what the Lord was conveying to the disciples. 

2. **Luke 22:40** “When He came to the place, He said to them, ‘Pray that you may not enter into temptation.’” 

3. And right before Judas and company had arrived, the text again notes: 

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

4. That should sound familiar to you when you think of the occasion where our Lord taught the disciples how to pray:

   **Matt. 6:13** “And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

5. Trials and temptations will come. And when they do, can we face them?

   And should we face them without God?

C. Jesus, teaches us from His own example, the need for prayer in times of adversity.
1. He prayed for help and was strengthened to face the horrors of crucifixion.
2. Should we do any less as we face our own trials and temptations?

**II. THE IMPORTANCE OF SOLITUDE.**

A. **Luke 22:41** “And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed.”

1. Jesus was not a great distance from the disciples, but far enough away that He could have a private prayer to His Father.
2. It wasn’t that He was seeking to exclude the disciples, but that He wanted that more intimate time to express to God what was on His heart.

B. When the Lord spoke of the hypocrites who loved to pray openly so they would receive the praise of men, He said:

   **Matt. 6:5-6** “And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

   6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

1. Notice the emphasis on the need for seclusion and intimacy.
2. This is the encouragement to have those private moments with God.
3. In no way does this fault the need for public prayer. But what it does stress is the importance of that quality one on one time with God.
4. Yes, Jesus prayed openly. We have the example of **John 17** where the disciples were able to hear the entire prayer.
5. But here, in the garden of Gethsemane, there was that alone time in prayer to God.

C. There are Christians today who struggle with this very thing.
1. They assemble with the saints and are privileged to hear the public prayer.
2. Participating in worship is something they recognize as being important.
3. But they struggle when it comes to finding that alone time to pray to God.
4. Too many things keep them busy, and they don’t have those much needed alone moments in earnest prayer to God.

III. THE DEPTH OF PRAYER.

A. Luke 22:42 “saying, ‘Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.’”

Luke 22:44 “And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”

B. We observe the original content of the prayer – the request that the cup be taken away.
   1. The word *cup* as it is used here is a metonymy, a figure of speech where the cup stands for something greater.
   2. In this case it is a cup of suffering, referring to our Lord’s impending anguish and pain.

C. This obviously was not a request to be taken lightly, for Jesus knew full well that what was coming would be sheer agony.

D. If one has any doubts as to the gravity of this prayer, *vs 44* makes it crystal clear.
   1. It says He was already in agony.
      1) *Agony* – means intense pain of the mind or body.
      2) In some instances it is a term which has reference to a violent struggle.
      3) This helps us understand our Lord’s frame of mind when He was offering this prayer.
   2. He prayed then more earnestly – which means that it was more intense or of a greater degree.
   3. He was greatly disturbed with what He was facing, as we can well imagine.
   4. And should we have any doubts as to the level of His anguish, Scripture reveals an amazing fact.
      “Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”
      1) We observe that the text does not say, that great drops of blood fell to the ground.
      2) But clearly it was like or similar to that very thing.
      3) One of the things we need to remember here is that this is being penned by Luke.
      4) Yes, it is inspired, but there is also that flavor, if you will, of a doctor’s perspective which God permits in the writing.
      5) There has been considerable discussion over the years as to why His anguish is described in this manner.
      6) It would seem to suggest that the reference to great drops of blood
gives us a more vivid picture of the size of the drops of sweat.

7) Regardless as to what this might actually have reference to, it is intended to present us with the image of Jesus in terrible agony.

IV. PRACTICAL APPLICATION.

A. Every single one of us face difficulties.
   1. It may not happen daily; it may come in waves; but at some point, it will happen.
   2. In our efforts to be more like Jesus, we need to take it to heart to learn to be a prayerful people.
   3. We rob ourselves of the help of God because we think we can handle our difficulties all by ourselves.
   4. James gave the much needed admonition:
      James 4:2 “You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.”
   5. Consider this: if Jesus needed to pray in order to be able to face the difficulties that He did, do you think you need to do anything less?
   6. What did Peter write?
      1 Pet. 2:21 “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.”
   7. Paul also wrote:
      1 Cor. 11:1 “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.”
   8. These men believed in prayer. And they practiced what they preached.
   9. Jesus was a man of prayer. And if our Master was so devoted to it, we should be too.

B. Jesus, the apostles, the followers of our Lord, all believed in the importance of daily prayer.
   1. They found time to separate themselves from others in order to have those intimate prayers with God.
   2. Our text in the garden notes that Jesus was accustomed to going to this place to have His solitude that He could pray (Luke 22:39).
   3. In Matt. 6, He teaches us how to pray and encourages us to find that alone time for that very thing (Matt. 6:6).
   4. The Psalmist stressed this need for personal prayer:
      Psa. 55:17 “Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice.”
   5. Daniel demonstrated by his actions that he believed in personal private prayer.
      Dan. 6:10 “...And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.”
   6. In the New Testament, we read of an occasion where the apostle Peter spent alone time to God in prayer.
Acts 10:9 “...Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour.”

7. The point is, you need to find the time and the solitude that you might talk with your heavenly Father.

C. Jesus then provides us with the example of the depth of our prayers.
   1. When He prayed in the garden, it came from the depth of His soul. It came from deep within.
   2. There was genuine emotion and feeling.
   3. This was not a “canned” prayer; that is, one that was rehearsed or stated like one that He had heard.
   4. This was personal, from the heart, and so intense, that it showed His need for God.
   5. When we face the trials, temptations, and difficulties of this life, we need to let God know how badly we need Him.
   6. It is not as though God does not know what you are going to ask for. Matt 6:8 “For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.”
   7. The point is you still need to ask.
   8. Do you think that the Father did not know what Jesus needed in the garden?
   9. There is no doubt that the Father totally understood, but there was still the need to Jesus to express to the Father His earnest need.
   10. It is important that we express ourselves to God in prayer, in order that it becomes quite apparent that we truly need God and His help.

CONCLUSION:

1. The incident in Gethsemane stresses to us the need for prayer.
2. If we truly want to be more like Jesus, then we need to take this lesson to heart.
3. Friends, we need to be people of prayer.