

Harvest

Evangelical Free Church

Praying Like Jesus
For Adult Bible Fellowships and Small Groups Meeting Jan. 31-Feb 6, 2010

Join us in being on mission with God!

OUR VISION

To continually mature and grow as a united body of Jesus-imitators who live out God's greatest commandment to "Love" by exalting God and serving one another, and His greatest commission to "Go" by reaching into and shaping our local, regional, and global communities.

"Praying in Dark Times"

Luke 22:39-46

Getting Started

After an introductory time, discuss the following questions in your group or class.

Sometimes we face decisions that are extremely challenging. They may be about good things. We might be planning a family vacation for this summer or looking at how to manage a small group in our home that just keeps growing.

Then there are those occasions when the decisions are about costly things. Do we put another \$1500 in the car we currently drive or look to trade it in on something else? Do we put up with chronic pain a bit longer or seek medical help right away? And where do we go for counsel and guidance?

- Q: Identify some of the kinds of decisions that you have made in life that were difficult because they had big consequences.

A turning point for Jesus

We can assume that decision-making was always simple for Jesus because of the intimacy and unity between Jesus and the Father. While it is true that there were not two opposing philosophies of life at work, there was still a struggle because of the consequences of the choices that Christ was called to make.

- 1. This account follows the shared Passover meal in what we call the upper room. Jesus and his disciples celebrated the rescue of the Jewish nation from bondage in Egypt together before this event happened. How does the rescue celebrated at Passover give meaning to the decision Jesus was faced with in our text?

For us today the Mount of Olives is a tourist site that pilgrims to Israel visit regularly. In Jesus day it was not a notable place. It was simply a hillside outside of Jerusalem on which olive trees produced fruit for local consumption.



Luke 22:39-46

³⁹ Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him.

⁴⁰ On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation."⁴¹

He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed,⁴² "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."⁴³ An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him.⁴⁴

And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

{⁴⁴ Some early manuscripts do not have verses 43 and 44.} ⁴⁵ When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow.

⁴⁶ "Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation."

2. What would have been different for Jesus to pray here with the Father rather than back in the upper room?

3. Can you think of some places you were when you made major decisions in your life? Where you there by accident, or intentionally?

4. In your experience, are certain places better locations to think, make decisions, and pray?

5. Jesus not only prays here at the Mount of Olives, he also instructs his disciples to pray as well. What is surprising about the prayer directive he gives in verse 40?

Jesus directs his disciples to pray about their own lives. He knows that they are vulnerable, and he calls them to pray before he wrestles with his own future.

6. What kind of temptations do you think Jesus was concerned about regarding his disciples at this point in time?

7. What are some of the temptations for born-again evangelical Christians that seem more seductive or more common in 2010 than in other previous years or decades? What do you think we need to be especially alert to in light of the culture we live in today?

Jesus separated himself from the disciples. We don't know how far the metaphor of "a stone's throw" might be. (Some of us can throw a stone a long way.) The idea is that he was near them, but had some measure of privacy.

Compare Luke's account with Matthew 26:36-46 and Mark 14:32-42 and respond to the questions on the next page.

Praying in Dark Times

8. Who went with Jesus, at least part of the way, when he separated himself from the disciples?

9. What did Jesus reveal about his struggle according to Matthew 26:38 and Mark 14:34?

Prayer does not have to be a static thing. Apparently, Jesus prayed in more than one position during this occasion when he spoke from his heart with the Father.

10. What do you learn about how Jesus prayed by comparing Matthew 26:39, Mark 14:35, and Luke 22:41? What does this imply about how we physically approach God in prayer?

In Luke 22:42 Jesus makes a request about a cup. This is obviously not a literal cup, but something else.

11. What do you learn about the possible meaning of this *cup* in the following verses:

- Psalm 75:8 _____

- Isaiah 51:17 _____

- Jeremiah 25:15 _____

12. According to Jesus request in Luke 22:42, what does Jesus ask the Father to make as the key factor in granting or denying Jesus' request of Him?

Sometimes we can adjust our prayer so that the phrase, "if it be your will" is tacked on to any request, especially if it is a bold one. Let's think about that approach to prayer. There are times when it would not be wise to add that condition to our requests, as well as times when it makes sense.

13. Indicate whether the following requests be conditioned on the will of God?

A prayer that a Christian would live a morally pure life.

A request that God grant good weather for a wedding or graduation.



Reaching Up and Reaching Out

HARVEST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

524 River Hills Dr. P.O. Box 291

Phone: 515-733-5360 Web: www.harvestefree.org E-mail: office@harvestefree.org



A plea that God provide for the needs of a Christian brother or sister.

A request that the word of God be preached boldly and accurately.

A prayer that donations for a missionary would reach the target goal.

Asking God to heal someone from a major sickness or deadly disease.

A personal prayer to grow in wisdom, grace, and humility.

- 14. What changes inside of you when you present your requests to God and ask in the end that his will be done? What difference does that kind of praying make?

Three horizontal lines for writing an answer to question 14.

Even for Jesus, prayer was not easy. It can be difficult arduous, wearying work to pray to God.

- 15. How does verse 15 describe the effort Jesus put forth in prayer?

Two horizontal lines for writing an answer to question 15.

- 16. Verse 43 and 44 are not found in many manuscripts. If verse 43 is accurate, it reminds us that God meets us in the exhaustion of prayer. What does he do?

Two horizontal lines for writing an answer to question 16.

Note that the Bible does not say Jesus was bleeding, as some assume. Luke does not state that Jesus sweat was the color of blood.

- 17. What is the point of comparison in verse 44?

Two horizontal lines for writing an answer to question 17.

- 18. What is the reason that the disciples are not proactive in prayer with Jesus when he returns to speak with them? Does this give us any suggestions about when not to pray?

Three horizontal lines for writing an answer to question 18.

- 19. In verse 46 Jesus repeats the request of verse 40. Why do you think he calls them to this task again?

Three horizontal lines for writing an answer to question 19.

- 20. Brainstorm about some ways we can pray against the power of temptation in our own day.

Three horizontal lines for writing an answer to question 20.

Quotations are from THE HOLY BIBLE: NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.