



**“And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt”**  
(Mark 14:36).

### **Thy Will Be Done**

**Central Truth:** Christian commitment means unconditional surrender to the will of God.

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**Topic:** Christ: Sufferings of; Commitment; God: Will of.

This week's study jumps forward, skipping a full year in the ministry of Jesus. There will be three lessons studied in this “flash forward” section. The reason is to make the lesson content coincide with Easter Sunday on the calendar. The three lessons should be considered as in a parenthesis (March 23, March 30, April 6). The regular chronology of lessons will be taken up again with the study for April 13.

The record of the prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane is almost too sacred to read. It is difficult for human minds to understand what happened there on the fateful night before the crucifixion of the Lord.

Gethsemane was a garden (or a kind of orchard) located on the western slope of the Mount of Olives. It was just across the Kidron valley from the city of Jerusalem. (A municipal law decreed that the city's sacred soil should not be polluted with manure for gardens!) Some wealthy people had purchased gardens on the Mount of Olives. It was to such a garden, owned perhaps by a disciple, that Jesus was accustomed to go for rest, meditation, and prayer.

Jesus knew what was in store for Him. He foretold it to the disciples. Yet, He did not run from it. He left the upper room (where the Passover was observed and the Lord's Supper was instituted) to keep the owner of that house from being involved in His arrest. He sought the quiet of Gethsemane to pray the matter through before the fateful moment came.

Jesus' prayer, "Thy will be done," teaches most graphically that true commitment is abandonment to the will of God.

## **I. COMMITMENT IN SPITE OF OTHERS' FAILURE (Mark 14:27-31)**

It is much easier to be faithful when all the people about you are committed and encouraging your commitment. But what does a person do when He is the only one whose commitment holds firm? What does one do when his friends fail? What does one do when no one seems to understand, sympathize, or want to help? The truly committed person is faithful whether others support him or not.

*Do not expect perfection of any man, for every person will fail in some way and at some point.*

Jesus foreknew the failure of the disciples and warned them, "*All ye shall be offended because of me this night*" (Mark 14:27). He used a word for "offended" (Greek, *skandalizein*) which meant "to entrap, to trip up by some trick." Satan used the trick of the words of servant girls to trick Peter into a denial later that night. He used the trick of fear for personal safety to cause disciples to run from Gethsemane. He used the trick of physical exhaustion to keep the disciples from prayerful watchfulness in Gethsemane. Jesus foreknew the disciples' failures, but He loved them just the same.

Simon Peter was vehement in his expression of faithfulness to Jesus. His words, "*Although all shall be offended, yet will not I*" (Mark 14:29), reflected some very serious problems in the man. It showed his false pride, his confidence in his own strength, and his scorn for the weakness he thought he saw in others. Yet, he was the special one whom Satan had desired to sift as wheat, and for whom the Lord Jesus had interceded (Luke 22:31, 32). Such a self-assured attitude contradicted the words of Jesus and revealed that Peter did not know himself. "*But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise*" (Mark 14:31).

Yet, the disciples failed to be faithful to Jesus. In spite of the Lord's warnings of coming testings (John 14:29), they failed. In spite of His encouragement to them to pray (Mark 14:38), they failed. In spite of His announcement that one of them would betray Him (Mark 14:18-21), they failed. In spite of their strong statements of loyalty (Mark 14:31), they failed. The failure of well-meaning men who lived in the personal presence of Jesus should warn all Christians to distrust natural strength. "*It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man*" (Psalm 118:8).

## II. COMMITMENT IN SPITE OF PERSONAL SACRIFICE (Mark 14:32-36)

The way of obedience is often the way of suffering. The incarnate Son of God was fully committed to the will of God. He declared in prophetic statement, *“I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart”* (Psalm 40:8). He entered the world for His incarnate ministry with this resolve, *“Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will O God.”* (Hebrews 10:7). That availability to the will of God did not keep Him from trials. *“Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered”* (Hebrews 5:8).

Jesus was faithful to the will of God in spite of the personal suffering it brought Him. He went from the upper room to the Garden of Gethsemane. He set up two lines of prayer warriors, leaving eight apostles near the entrance to the garden with instructions to watch and pray, and taking three apostles further into the garden where they were to pray. He went on yet further, cast himself down on the ground, and prayed,

Spiritual distress seized the Lord Jesus. He was struck with terror and amazement and deeply troubled and distressed (according to the meaning of the Greek terms used in verse 33 as interpreted by *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*.) He told the disciples, *“My soul is exceeding sad — overwhelmed with grief — so that it almost kills Me! Remain here, and keep awake and be watching.”* (See Mark 14:34.) Though the custom was to pray standing with upraised arms, Jesus fell prostrate on the ground (indicating the depth of His spiritual anguish) and kept on praying that the fatal hour might pass from Him if it be possible. What distress He suffered in the path of obedience!

Dr. Luke alone reported that the sweat of Jesus became *“as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground”* in indication of the agony He felt and the intensity with which He prayed (Luke 22:44).

*“If it be possible . . .,”* Jesus prayed. God is able to do anything. So He could have turned the cross away from Jesus in view of His omnipotence. But Jesus could not be the Savior without the cross. The paradox increased His distress.

Who expects the way of obedience to be a way of ease? It is not so! No person has ever been more available to the will of God, nor has any walked perfectly therein as Jesus. Yet, He found it necessary to offer up *“prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears”* (Hebrews 5:7). Let not the disciple think he will walk an easier way than the Master.

Why Gethsemane? What truth can be learned from it? Above all else, it

showed that Jesus' sufferings were voluntary. He went to the cross because He chose to do so, not because He was compelled. He paid the price for sinners.

### **III. COMMITMENT IN SPITE OF UNCONCERN FOR OTHERS (Mark 14:37-40)**

Jesus needed divine and human companionship as He prayed in Gethsemane. He requested the disciples, "*Tarry ye here, and watch*" (Mark 14:34). He returned from a prayer period and found them asleep. He awoke them and rebuked them with the words, "*Sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak*" (Mark 14:37, 38). The Father was truly available to the Son in Gethsemane, but the apostles were not.

What does one do when others are unconcerned? How does he respond when no other person understands, or sympathizes, or prays, or tries to help? What if His repeated calls for prayer are ignored because of personal interests and selfish motives?

Jesus gave the example of commitment to God in spite of unconcern of others. Do not respond in bitterness to the ones sleeping when they should be praying. There is a tone of sorrow, but not harshness, when Jesus returned the third time to find the disciples sleeping: "*Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners*" (Mark 12:41, 42).

What if other people prove unfaithful? That gives you no excuse to be unfaithful. Your commitment to the will of God is based on who He is, not upon the attitude or response of people about you. You can be faithful—indeed, you must be faithful—whether any other person in all the world is in the will of God.

### **IV. COMMITMENT WITHOUT COMPROMISE (Mark 14:41, 42)**

The issue was settled in prayer as Jesus prayed in Gethsemane. He did not want to die. He drew back from the burden of bearing the sin-guilt of the world as if it were His own. He did always those things that please the Father (John 8:29), but He was to be under the judgment of the Father as if

He had done nothing that pleased Him. In that way He would “*make his soul an offering for sin*” (Isaiah 53:10). Jesus settled the issue as He prayed in the garden.

Look at the difference the Gethsemane experience made in Jesus. He went into the garden “*sore amazed . . . very heavy; And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death . . . Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt*” (Mark 12:33, 34, 36). That surrender to the will of God made all the difference in the world.

Jesus came forth from Gethsemane's prayer battle with a calm and serene spirit which never hesitated in fulfilling the will of God. “*Sleep on now,*” He said to the apostles, “*and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand*” (Mark 14:41, 42). But where did they go? Did Jesus try to flee away in the darkness and hide from arrest? Not at all. He walked right out to meet those who had come to arrest Him, even though it meant He was walking to the cross.

Thank God for Jesus' submission to the will of God. Thank God for the submission of all those who are disciples of Jesus. Refusing to submit to the will of God was the original sin committed by Adam and Eve in Eden. It brought ruin to the human race. Jesus' submission to the will of God was the redemptive deed on Calvary. It brought redemption to the human race.

How tragic that many people fear the will of God. It should not be so. The only reason one fears the will of God is that he does not trust God. Anyone who knows God personally and is submitted to His will learns by experience that the will of God is “good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2). The best thing that could happen in the life of any person is for the will of God to be done completely in his life.

There is a wonderful promise given in Holy Scripture to those who obey God fully. “*The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever*” (I John 2:17). There is blessed perfection in the will of God.

When a certain missionary was preparing to go to an area where there was social and political turmoil, a friend asked, “Aren't you afraid to go into that troubled nation?” He replied, “I will be safer in the will of God there than out of the will of God here.”

“*Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is*” (Ephesians 5:17).

1. What was Jesus' burden in Gethsemane?
2. How can one be faithful when friends are unfaithful?
3. What prompted Peter to insist on his loyalty?
4. What does Hebrews 5:8 mean?
5. Why did Jesus pray, "Thy will be done"?
6. Why are the events of Gethsemane recorded in the Bible?
7. What change came as Jesus prayed in Gethsemane?
8. When should you pray, "Thy will be done"?
9. How can you know the will of God in your daily affairs?
10. How can you be more committed to the will of God?