



World Christian Fellowship

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Jesus Son of Sorrow!

Matthew 26:36-46

Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46.

Matthew 26:36-46, *Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there." ³⁷And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. ³⁸Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me." ³⁹He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."*

⁴⁰*Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? ⁴¹Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." ⁴²Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done." ⁴³And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. ⁴⁵Then He came to His disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and*

resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."

For many years, it has been my own personal joy and privilege to make an intensive study of the life of Christ.

There are many Christians who know the characters and the details of a soap opera better than the details of the life of Jesus Christ. There are many Christians who could tell you all about movies, movie stars, TV. They could sing you every song that has been played in the last ten years.

There are people who could give you the batting average for everybody on the IPL teams.

I wanted so desperately to understand everything there was to understand here. I found myself coming up short all the time because the mystery was too deep. This is the God-Man, all God, 100 percent, all man, 100 percent, and yet He cries out to God for deliverance.

Yet He willingly, as God, goes to the cross that awaits Him. The apparent paradoxes are too profound to perceive.

While we love to know every single detail about the life of Christ, we can only go as far as we can go.

I trust that your heart will be open to what the Spirit of God will and is able to teach you as you look again at this great passage.

"I am never more vexed with myself than when I have done my very best to extol His dear name. What is it but holding a candle to the sun?" C.H. Spurgeon.

As we approach again this passage, I do so with a great desire in my heart that you should understand the wonder of what is happening, and yet with the sense of hopelessness that it is too deep, even for me.

We grasp what we can of the sacredness of this powerful moment in the life of our Lord. I want us to take the passage seriously.

We love to focus on the cross, but we miss the garden.

The garden is equally a place of great suffering for us, He suffered there. If we cannot desire to know every bit of that which is perceivable to us, then something is lacking in our love of the Saviour who suffered for us.

What was going on here?

Without a question this was a temptation.

There are some people who have suggested to me that this was not a temptation from Satan.

Satan was there in full force, trying to keep Christ from going to the cross, preventing the cross, preventing the resurrection.

Does someone ask me what makes you think that?

Satan is not mentioned in this passage.

Yes, Satan is not mentioned here the reason Matthew gives no dignity to Satan.

But Satan is behind the scenes, and that is obvious.

In the upper room Satan appeared there and filled Judas. Judas to do what he was going to do.

Luke 22:3, *Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve.*

On the parallel account on the Gospel of John we see very provocative statement.

John 14:30, *I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.*

We are not going to talk much more.

Why?

“For the prince of this world comes.”

I Am going now into conflict with Satan.

“But he has nothing in Me.”

Satan may come with his temptation, but he will find no place in Me where temptation will succeed. There is nothing in Me that falls to that.

As Jesus approached the garden, He knew He was entering into conflict with Satan himself.

Luke 22:53, *When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.”*

This is Satan’s hour.

This is your hour.

He knew Satan was involved in all these things, and He sensed that conflict even in the upper room.

As Jesus goes to the garden, He enters into the most intense struggle with Satan of His life. Even more intense than the temptation at the beginning of His ministry is this one at the end.

Because at the beginning we have no indication that He sweat great drops of blood.

The agony of this temptation is unequalled.

Satan comes to try to keep Christ off the cross,

- Redemption cannot be made,
- Atonement cannot be accomplished,
- Satisfaction for sin cannot be rendered.

V 36, *Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there."*

Gethsemane means olive press. It was a garden on the hillside of the Mount of Olives owned by a follower of Jesus, who allowed Jesus to use it at His discretion.

Jesus went into that garden, a remarkably familiar place. It was after midnight. They had just celebrated the Passover. It was the last time He would be with His disciples. He took them to that place for seclusion, for privacy, that He might enter into prayer with the Father.

Entering in the gate, He said to the disciples sit here while I go and pray.

V 37, *And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed.*

Jesus went in the gate, eight of them stayed, Judas already having gone. Three of them went with Him deeper into the garden, to seclusion.

After midnight, the city bustling and alive because it is Passover season, Judas, already having contracted for his money, is now leading the band of people to come and capture Christ. At least they are assembling at this point.

Jesus knows it is only a matter of moments until He will be taken prisoner for execution.

Jesus says, "You stay here while I go and pray."

1. Sorrow:

V 37, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed.

V 38, Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me."

We are very much aware of the sorrow and depression of the Lord.

Our Lord at this point is thinking of the prophecy of Isaiah.

Isaiah 53:3, He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

The phrase "a man of sorrows" is a characterization of Jesus.

He is a man of sorrows. Sorrow is not just an element of His life, but it is that which characterizes His life.

Jesus sorrowed, life-long sorrow.

He was always a man of sorrows. He was acquainted with grief as a rule of life.

He has carried our griefs and carried our sorrows.

Jesus was characteristically a sorrowing person.

- Sometimes that sorrow burst forth in tears.
- Sometimes it burst forth in sighing.
- Sometimes in anguish of face.
- Sometimes was hidden.

But always was there, for always He suffered in the humiliation of His incarnation.

Jesus is a man of sorrows.

Isaiah 53, you would know what led to that sorrow.

He is despised, that word basically means to be hated.

He is rejected, that word is the word for being forsaken, but it literally means “He who is no longer regarded as a man.”

He was so rejected that it could be said of Him that He was not even considered to be human.

He was esteemed not, which is to say He was held in contempt.

Isaiah 53:4, *Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.*

- ✓ He was stricken means to be like a person with leprosy, to have a fatal disease, a communicable disease, and become an outcast.
- ✓ He was afflicted, that is given pain.
- ✓ He was wounded, which means pierced.

Isaiah 53 goes on to say.

- ✓ He was bruised, which means He was crushed.
- ✓ He had stripes, which speak of His scourging.
- ✓ He was oppressed, means to have exacted on you the payment of a debt.
- ✓ He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, to be offered like a sacrifice.
- ✓ He was imprisoned.
- ✓ He was wrongfully judged, and
- ✓ He was cut off or killed.

This was life-long suffering for Him!

But He endured it.

Isaiah 53:11, *He shall see the labour of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities.*

Jesus shall see the pain of His soul and be satisfied.
He bore it all but was satisfied to do it for our sake.

The suffering of Jesus Christ is not simply isolated to the cross. In pre-cross suffering, we reach the epitome in this passage when we see Jesus in the garden.

- ✓ He suffers here the greatest suffering prior to His actual dying in all His life.
- ✓ He suffers here in a conflict with Satan, who would divert Him from the cross.
- ✓ He suffers here in the overwhelming anticipation of the sinless one becoming sin, of the deathless one dying, of being alienated from God.

The suffering is more than we can understand or even explain.

In the midst of His sorrow, He cried out to God.

V 39, 42, and 44, we have the three different periods of prayer in which He cried out to God.

What we learn here is not just about Christ. We are not only learning about His suffering, which is a wonderful thing to learn, because the more we know about His suffering. The more we understand His love, and more thankful we ought to be.

It is a great thing to just see His suffering for us, that we might know the measure of His love.

But beyond even that, Jesus gives us also a lesson about how to face the temptation.

How to respond to the conflict that comes to one who endeavours to do the will of God, to experience the power of God.

2. Prayer.

The way Jesus faced the temptation was in prayer.

V 39, *He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."*

O Father, I want to do Your will. If in Your will there is another way than this way, may it be, but I want to do Your will.

V 39, *"As You will,"*

V 42, *"Your will be done."*

V 44, *"And He prayed the third time, saying the same words."*

He never said anything other than "Your will, Your will, Your will."

But the agony was so great, and the pain was so great.

The horror of bearing sin, dying, being separated from God, and all that struggle that was going on, was so profound.

He says, "If there is any other way, do it. If not, I will be willing to do whatever Your will is." He was not trying to avoid the cross.

John 12:23-27, *But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. ²⁴Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. ²⁵He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honour. ²⁷"Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour.*

Jesus said that I am not asking God to save Me from this. This is what I came for.

But the pain, the anguish, and the excruciating horror is so great, that something in Him cries out and says, "If there is another way, O God, let it be another way. If not, I am willing."

At this point, He begins to sweat.

It is a cool night. It is a time of the year when it is not hot, and the sweat had to do with His agony.

Jesus begins to profusely sweat.

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.*

Just prior to the sweating of what appeared to be great clots of blood that an angel from heaven came and strengthened Him.

Luke 22:43, *Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.*

His supplication was so intense that it was unto death.

It may well have been that Jesus might have died in the garden, except for an angel from heaven that strengthened Him. The angel came and strengthened Him during this excruciating agony, which caused blood to appear on His flesh.

The sorrow is just amazing. The lonely prayer adds to the intensity. To be so sorrowful as to be close to death intensifies it. To cry out to God asking if there is another way, then to sweat clots of blood is unimaginable.

The phenomenon of sweating blood is exceedingly rare. It can be best explained in simplicity in this way: when a person enters extreme anguish and sensitivity, such as our Lord here. The resulting strain could go as far as to finally cause the

dilation of the subcutaneous capillaries. As those begin to dilate under this kind of intensity, they could burst. Then the blood flowing out of those burst capillaries must find its way out, and it does so through the sweat glands.

What happened was Christ is sweating profusely in His agony.

Hebrews 5:7, *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,*

Jesus is crying, sobbing, shedding tears, and sweating profusely.

The intensity bursts the subcutaneous capillaries, the blood comes flowing out the sweat glands, mixes with the sweat, and it looks as if blood is being sweat from His body. It runs down His face, and it drips onto His clothing. **The anguish is absolutely unimaginable to us.**

After that first session, He was strengthened, no doubt, by the presence of the angel. He rises from prayer.

Having defeated the enemy for that moment, He comes back to His disciples in **V 40**, then **V 42**, He goes back again the second time.

V 42, Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done."

Jesus uses the word "My." This is the only occasion He did that in His life, because He is holding on to the intimacy that He has with God.

He feels the enemy trying to pull Him away from God. Get Him to do what He wants to do, what would be the effortless way, rather than do what God has designed.

Jesus holds to the possessiveness of His relationship to the Father.

Then Jesus changes His petition.

First, He said, "If it is possible, let it pass."

Now He says, "If this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it Your will be done."

- First, He said, "If it can pass, let it pass."
- Now He says, "If it can't pass, then Your will be done."

Again, we get the idea the temptation is to avoid the cross.

The cross is the cup of wrath, of judgment, the experience of sin-bearing.

The tempter is saying, "Avoid the cross it should not happen to You, claim Your rights, You are the Son of God, this is enough

humiliation. The sweat, the agony, which is enough, not the cross.”

Jesus says, “If it can pass, let it pass.”

Jesus knows it cannot, and so He says, “If it can’t pass, then I will do it.”

We can sense that Jesus is being strengthened in the commitment to do God’s will.

Then He finishes the second round.

Goes back, and then in **V 44**, returns to pray again.

V 44, *So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.*

- ✓ First time He said, “If it can pass, let it pass,”
- ✓ Second time, “If it can’t pass, I will do it,”
- ✓ Third time, “Since it can’t pass, let it happen.”

Instead of getting weaker with every round, it appears He got stronger.

He was winning the victory over the enemy.

Strong crying, strong tears, agonizing, supplication before God, He is holding on to the will of God against all that hell could bring.

If Satan can tempt, he tempted there. If he has power run to an absolute limit to tempt, he unloaded it there. It all came there to Christ to keep Him from the cross.

But the bottom line all the way through is “Your will be done.” He was resolute. He was committed to do the will of God.

Why three times of prayer?

The best answer is because there were three waves of Satanic attack.

Just like there were three waves of Satanic attack in **Matthew 4**, in the temptation when He began His ministry.

Satan came at Him three times again, and it took those three times for Satan to unload all his guns and to be defeated.

It took those three times for Christ to come to absolute resolution of His will to God, perfectly. It took those three times for Christ to go through all the unrelenting agony that God desired Him to go through.

We learn about prayer in this is so vital.

It is that prayer is not primarily an engine by which we run over God, by which we overcome His unwillingness. But prayer is primarily a means by which God, who is ever ready to give us what is best. Because we set ourselves in the place of doing His will.

Prayer is me lining up with what God wants to do at any price, even my life.

Satan comes and wants to divert us from the will of God to fulfil our own satisfaction, to push us off the track of obedience to grab whatever we want.

What prayer does is say, "O God, I do not want to go through this. This is not what I want to do, strengthen me."

Prayer lines us up with that perfect place of blessing.

After that third temptation, Jesus was the victor and Satan was defeated.

The enemy of His soul was gone. Christ was in perfect harmony with the will of God, perfectly submitted to the purpose of God, calmly ready to move to the cross. Satan was defeated.

The key to victory was prayer.

He cried out to God.

If Jesus needed to pray, who was God Himself, how desperately do we need to do that during temptation.

That is the lesson He would have His disciples learn, and us.

3. Sleep.

Because that tells us something about this scene as well.

V 39, Jesus went away to pray the first time. He told the disciples to stay there. He came back.

V 40, *“Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping,*

They were sleeping at the moment of greatest spiritual conflict in the history of the world. They were sleeping when they should have been praying.

It was obvious that when He left them and went forward to pray that He intended for them to pray where they were.

He even told them.

V 41, *“Watch and pray.”*

The idea was that they had much to pray about, were they so indifferent to the agonizing's of Jesus Christ that they slept.

They could not even stay awake to pray for their own Master.

They just been told in **V 31** that they were going to be offended, and they were going to be scattered. They were going to run like scared sheep.

Peter had been told that he was actually going to deny Jesus Christ three times before the cock crow.

**Didn't they have something to pray about when Jesus had said He was going to die, and be offered as a sacrifice, and rise again, and that it was going to happen this night?
How could they possibly sleep?**

But they did.

The price of victory spiritually is always vigilance.

V 40, *"Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping,*

Now it was natural to sleep.

It was after midnight.

- They had had a busy week.
- They had experienced the accumulated weariness that a busy week brings.
- They had just eaten a huge meal, an entire sacrificial lamb, consumed by twelve people, and late at night, and all that went with it, with the unleavened bread, and the wine, and the dipping into the sop.

They had reason to be sleepy.

Then they had taken a long walk and a hard hike up the Mount of Olives, and they must have felt weary from that.

Luke 22:45, *When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow.*

They went to sleep because of sorrow. Everything was getting very depressing.

When you get very depressed, you like to escape with sleep.

But it points out that they never had come to grips with the genuine issues.

It does not matter how weary my body is, if my mind is exercised in some spiritual conflict, I cannot sleep. I have found that if I am struggling with some spiritual thing, if I am struggling over some great crisis, sleep leaves me, and that battle takes over. But in their case, it did not.

They were so weak and so sinful that they could even be indifferent to the conflict that was coming, on their part and the Lord's, and go to sleep but hard to believe.

We should not be surprised at Peter, James and John falling asleep, because they fell asleep at the transfiguration, too.

We would not have done that.

Luke 9:32, *But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him.*

They went to sleep. I would not want them sitting in the front few rows of my church.

The intensity of the struggle, the sense of their weakness, the warning of the Lord, the prediction that it was coming this night, the obvious agony of Christ, the institution of the supper, of the blood and the bread for the body, they must have known what was going on.

The Lord comes back, and He said to Peter, the leader.

V 40, *Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What! Could you not watch with Me one hour?"*

Jesus was gone for a brief period of time.

Can't you be mentally alert for one hour?

Can't you join Me in the spiritual struggle for one hour?

Then He went back to pray the second time, and after praying the second time, returned.

V 43, *And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.*

We might conclude that they never woke up from the first time. But the fact that they went to sleep again means they were awakened by the Lord the first time when He said that could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation.

Jesus had given them a warning when they were awake, and even that warning could not keep them alert. He went back to pray and they fell asleep again.

Why did they fall asleep?

“Their eyes were heavy.”

They were overpowered by the natural.

Kind of sad, really. The Lord is so alone. They are so indifferent.

V 44-45, *So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.⁴⁵ Then He came to His disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.*

They were still totally indifferent, out of touch with what is happening. Shocking!

The best way to translate that in the interrogatory, as a question. The Greek text can be translated that way.

Jesus was asking them a pensive, painful question.

You still sleeping and taking your rest?

Unaware of the nature of the spiritual battle, unaware of what is going on?

Weak men were indifferent to the needs of Christ.

Indifferent to the power of the enemy, who is going to tempt them. They are about to be utterly overwhelmed with sin.

Matthew 26:56, *But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.*

- They will never pass the temptation.
- They will fall into sin and denial and rejection of Christ.
- They do not want to be associated with Him.
- They run.
- They were not ready.

What our Lord is communicating here in this is that in all spiritual battles, **the victory goes to those who are alert, because they know their weakness.**

They put too much stock in their good intentions, and they did not realize their weakness.

The battle does not go to the sleepers, but to the vigilant.

It is a tragedy to see spiritual self-confidence, which is unpreparedness.

4. Strength:

V 45, *Then He came to His disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.*

"Behold," the word means look.

Did Jesus see something?

I think He saw something.

What did Jesus see?

I think He saw torches.

- ✓ He saw men with swords.
- ✓ He saw Roman Soldiers from Fort Antonius.
- ✓ He saw the Jewish leaders.
- ✓ He saw Judas.

Down the slope of the Mount of Olives, He could see the moving of this crowd of people coming to Him.

"The hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."

What a contradiction?

The sinless one given to sinners.

You are sleeping, but they are coming.

Jesus had won the victory.

He had defeated the fleeing hosts of hell.

He stood, covered with bloody sweat, victorious.

The victor, courageously ready to face the cross.

“You sleep. You will never survive this. You are not ready.”

He was ready.

He had conquered the enemy in the strength of His Father.

They had slept.

V 46, Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.”

It means to go forward to meet an advancing enemy.

It is a military term.

We are going to meet them. That is strength.

Jesus was strengthened in the temptation.

He was victorious.

He resolutely proceeds to them.

They do not have to find Him.

Jesus walks up to them.

John 18:4-6, *Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "Whom are you seeking?"* ⁵*They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth."* *Jesus said to them, "I am He."* *And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them.* ⁶*Now when He said to them, "I am He," they drew back and fell to the ground.*

Great courage!

The courage of invincibility, of one who has committed His life to God, who can raise the dead.

Jesus was tempted by Satan, Do you know God will raise you from the dead? What if you die and never rise again? What if this is the end? What if you die and perish in hell?"

Jesus committed Himself to the One who is able to raise the dead and resolutely moved toward them in confidence. Going to the cross, He could see beyond that cross the joy that was set before Him.

Hebrews 12:2, *looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

In strength Jesus meets the enemy.

- There is nothing in the Scripture that says run from the devil.
- The Scripture says that resist the devil and he will run from you.

You resist Satan in the strength of prayer, and the Word of God, which He demonstrated in His first temptation.

- ✓ Each time in the first temptation, He answered with the Word.
- ✓ Each time in the second great temptation, He answered in prayer.

The Word and prayer that is the two-edged sword with which we defeat the enemy.

V 46, *“The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.”*

Jesus has reference to all of those who will be responsible for His execution, Jews, and Romans alike, the sinners who take His life.

Conclusion:

After the first prayer session, Jesus came back and said, “Can’t you watch with Me one hour,” to Peter.

Then He gives the principle to teach: “Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation.”

Jesus says to them, after the first time of prayer, and their first episode of sleeping, “Be alert and keep praying.”

Continuous action: stay alert and stay in prayer.

Do not let your self-confidence lull you to sleep.

Do not let your good intentions make you drowsy, that you enter not into temptation.

The way to keep from being engulfed in temptation is to be alert to it, to look at the craftiness of Satan, to be aware of what he is doing, of what is going on, and to go in prayer to the Father.

Did Peter learn?

2 Peter 2:9, *then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,*

A great statement!

God knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation.

To whom do you go?

Go to God.

Peter returns to tell the general what he has learned, and the general leads the troops into battle.

Jesus went for the divine strength that was essential.

The Lord says you better watch, be alert, keep a wary eye for Satan, and keep praying, depending on God.

Matthew 6:13, *And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one.*

We go to the Lord for that.
We cannot do it on our own.

They thought they could.
They said we would never betray You.
But they did it all.

Our Lord gave us a great principle for victory.
It is not easy!
No, it is not.

Why?

V 41, *“Because the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”*

Our Lord says something here that is very essential for every believer to understand.

You have got a problem inside of you that Christ really did not have, in a sense. His perfection allowed Him to act perfectly, and to respond perfectly in every temptation, so that He was without sin.

But what we have is a unique problem.

We have a willing spirit, and a weak flesh.

What that means is that regenerated people who love God, desire to do what is right. No doubt, Peter, James, and John, loved the Saviour, and would have wanted to do what was right. But they were weak.

No doubt the other eight wanted to do what was right. There was something in their heart that longed to do what the Lord would want them to do and do the will of God, but they were weak.

Paul really elucidates this same issue.

Romans 7:15, *For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do.*

Peter later, when he cried and wept over his denial because he did things he would not have wanted to do, and he did not do things he would have wanted to do.

1 Peter 5:8, *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

Where do you think Peter learned that?

In the garden of Gethsemane.

Paul is fighting the same thing here.

Romans 7:16-18, *If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. ¹⁷But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. ¹⁸For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.*

You have a regenerated and renewed spirit.

In that renewed spirit, you desire to do what is right.

You desire to do what is good.

You desire to do the law of God, divine principles.

But you also have, as a part of your flesh, and your humanness. It is your body and its appetites and mental desires. It is all the lusts of your humanness, the lusts of the flesh.

You have a spirit that has been renewed, reborn, regenerated, recreated, and it longs to do what is right, obey, and to do the thing that God is pleased that it should do, but it is restrained.

It is defeated, very often, by your humanness, your flesh.

You really have a battle between the new you and your humanness.

Romans 7:19-23, *For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. ²⁰Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. ²¹I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. ²²For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. ²³But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*

He keeps making this distinction, it is the distinction between spirit and flesh, the law that is good, and evil that is present, spirit and flesh, same thing.

Paul's conclusion?

Romans 7:24-25, *O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.*

Jesus Christ is going to deliver me and someday, Christ is going to end the battle. He is going to deliver me from the flesh.

Do you know what happens when you die and go to heaven? You lose the flesh, and your spirit is free to do what it wills to do in the perfection of God's holy purpose.

That is the battleground. The spirit is willing, prompted by God the flesh is weak.

How are you going to win?

How are you going to be victorious?

Galatians 5:16, *I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*

It is a matter of walking in obedience to the Holy Spirit, being filled with the Word of God, yielding your life to God's Spirit

Application:

Confidence, sleep, temptation, sin, and disaster.

Confidence: I can manage it. I do not need to pray. I will never deny the Lord. I will be faithful. I am never going to get beyond the possibility where I am strong enough to be victorious. I am all right.

Sleep follows confidence.

What do you have to be vigilant about?

Why bother to be alert?

Why bother to watch what you see, and what you read, and what you hear, and where you go, and what you think?

Sleep leads then to temptation, and to sin, and disaster.
The disciples lived it that way.

What about the sequence of victory?

The pattern we see in the Lord.

Instead of confidence, you have humility.

Jesus humbled Himself and became dependent on God.

Jesus, knowing the weakness of human existence, and knowing He was a man, even if a sinless man, knew He needed to go to God to be strengthened, and was strengthened by an angel.

- Confidence was the disciples had.
- Confidence led to sleep.

✓ Jesus had the humility.

✓ Humility led to prayer.

In the temptation, obedience to the will of God, and victory.

- You make a choice in your life, either to be self-confident, sleep, end up in disaster,
- Or in humility, fall on your knees before God in prayer for strength, and in the temptation comes obedience, and out of the obedience, victory.

This is the lesson our Lord would have us learn.