

Please be seated. Our scripture tonight comes to us from Mark 14, verses 32 through 42. We'll skip back to the mandate

and the supper in a bit, but I thought we might skip ahead a little bit as we think about what happened in the garden so many years ago for us. As you turn there to Mark 14, verse 32, let's go to Word and Prayer. Gracious God and most holy heavenly Father, we thank you for your holy word. We're delighted that we might come before you and listen to you, hear from you. Lord, would you quicken our hearts and quicken our minds, quicken our souls that we might hear from you, hear from heaven, Lord. This very word is breathed out by you and useful for teaching and reproof and correction and training and righteousness, and we're in need of it tonight, Lord. And so, Father, by your grace, would you work through the power of your Holy Spirit, work through your preached word. May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all of our hearts be acceptable and pleasing to you, O Lord, our rock and our redeemer. We pray it in Christ's name, amen. Mark 14, verses 32 through 42. Let's give attention to God's word. And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, sit here while I pray. And he took with him Peter and James and John and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. And he said to them, my soul is very sorrowful, even to death, remain here and watch. And going a little further, he fell on the ground and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me, yet not what I will, but what you will. And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. And again, he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer him. And he came the third time and said to them, are you still sleeping and taking rest? It is enough, the hour has come. The son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See my betrayer is at hand. Thanks be to God for his holy and errant and therefore authoritative word. June 6th of 1944, Allied forces stormed the beaches of Normandy to liberate France from the invasion of the Nazis. It was supposed to happen on June 5th, but there was a weather problem. And so on June 5th, General Dwight Eisenhower gathered the troops and he spoke to them saying, soldiers, sailors, and airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Forces, you're about to embark upon the Great Crusade. toward which we have striven these many months, the eyes of the world are upon you." He would go on to say, your task will not be

an easy one. Your enemy is well-trained, well-equipped, and battle-hardened. He will fight savagely. I have full confidence in your courage. devotion to duty, and skill in battle, we will accept nothing less than full victory. You can only imagine what these men must have been feeling as their emotions are stirred towards the battle, but also trepidatious and full of fear as they're about to overrun this beach and face something they'd never faced before. 4,000 of them would give their lives on that beach. Victory would come, but it was most necessary to stop the spread of this wicked Nazi regime and save mankind, as it were. Well, there's a similar battle going on in our passage tonight. And it tells, that story tells in comparison to the scene that we have before us in the garden where one man takes upon himself the realms of darkness for the sake of his bride. Everything is at stake in the midst of this garden and here Jesus stands before his enemy Tonight he has gone from the city. He's been in the upper room with his disciples. He's taught them much. He's taken supper with them He's gone out of the city through the Kidron Valley up into an olive grove that he'd gone to regularly And there was a garden, Gethsemane, the olive press is what it means. And he would gather there at times and pray. And now he's going there with his disciples to pray. And when we come to the garden, we come to a place that perhaps we are actually scared to approach. What we see there unravels us. What does it mean that Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, the God-man, fully one with the Father and the Spirit, the one who created everything that we see by a word, the one who sustains it even now by the word of His power, would fall on His face in distress and sorrow, sweating profusely, sweating blood, Luke says, as it were, and ask His Father to remove the cup? What does it mean? We tread on holy ground. And we and I am terrified to misstep as we come to this holy place and yet we have to come here because it's here in the scriptures that we find for us a real savior. Not a Jesus concocted by society, not a Jesus drawn up in our own minds, not a Jesus concocted by liberal theology that's left the reservation, but the real Jesus engaged in battle for his people. And I want us to think briefly of two questions. First, why was there such agony in this garden? Luke says that he was in agony. Why was there such agony in this garden? And secondly, what does it matter to you? I want to spend the bulk of our time in that first question. Why is there such agony in this garden? And I want to think of four things. There are more things, many more things, but I want to think of at least four. First, the disgust he feels. The disgust he feels, then the drink he fears. The desertion he faces and the duel he fights. The disgust he feels. We're talking about Jesus here in his humanity, his human mind, his human affections, his human will and desire. They're perfectly righteous, they're perfectly sinless, they're perfectly holy and yet they're

human. He has a divine mind. that is omniscient and all-powerful and upholding the universe by the word of its power, but he doesn't just access it like a data port and say, feed me and help me feel better in these dark moments. No, he's here in his humanity in the Garden of Gethsemane. No one's ever been more human here. And Jesus in the garden is left to do what he had to do all of his life. He's left to rely upon his faith in the Father. He's left to rely upon the scriptures that he's learned from childhood and put to memory. He's left to rely upon what he knows about himself as the messianic figure from scriptures. He's left to rely upon his great companion, the Holy Spirit, to strengthen and sustain him in the midst of this trial that he faces. But he's here and he must obey. He couldn't just talk about obedience. He had to be about obedience. He had to actually and truly and fully obey his father. And that's what he's doing here as he comes face to face with sin. That's what he's disgusted by. He's coming face to face with the reality that he will become sin for his people and it makes his stomach turn. It's like riding roller coaster. I went to Disney a couple years ago with my kids, and we rode this ride called the Velocicoaster. It was a Jurassic Park ride. 70 miles an hour, 155 feet high, and 4,700 stomach-churning feet long. When I got done, my head had been bouncing around in the fluid in my brain, and my stomach was in my throat, and I said to my family, I'm just gonna need a minute. Which was about two hours. That's what Jesus experiences when he comes headlong, face to face in his righteousness with our unrighteousness. It's a collision course that makes him disgusted. He's recoiling in his righteousness. He's never touched sin. He's never tasted sin. He's never committed sin. He's never spoken sin. And now his righteousness comes up against sin and he recoils. In reality, actually, the fact that we don't recoil this way when we think of our own sin, when we fondle sin, when we touch sin, when we taste sin, when we commit sin, when we dabble in sin, the fact that we don't recoil like this only speaks to our own depravity. The warped nature of our minds, the filthiness of our tongues, the impurity of our lives. But here tonight, there's agony. He's in deep distress. because here His righteousness is seeing the shadow of the sin that will be poured out upon Him on the cross, coming to begin to pervade His life and overshadow Him. He's tasting the disgust that He feels at becoming sin for us. Secondly, He drinks the drink He fears. We see in this passage the drink that he fears. Jesus falls on the ground, literally he collapses or he hurls himself onto the ground. No doubt this is what the author of Hebrews is reflecting upon in Hebrews 5 when he says that our Lord cried out with loud prayers and

supplication, with loud cries and with tears. Surely he's thinking about the garden and why is he crying out? He's crying out because he's about to drink the cup. What is this cup? This cup is in the Old Testament a symbol of the wrath and the righteous judgment of God upon the nations or even upon Judah and Israel when she rebels against him. He says in Jeremiah, take from my hand this cup of the wine of wrath and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. Psalm 7, five says, but it is God who executes justice, putting down one and lifting up another, 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 drain it down to the dregs. But in the garden, it's Jesus that begins to hold the cup. It's Jesus, the perfectly righteous one who knows about the cup, but it's no theological treatise that he's experiencing here. He will experience the reality of the cup. It's one thing to know the wrath of God. It's another thing to drink the wrath of God. And what he knows is coming is that he will have to drink that cup to its dregs. And he will have the full, unmitigated wrath of God poured out upon him. He knows that God is holy. He knows that God is powerful. And he knows what the author of Hebrews will proclaim later on, that it's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. And that's what he's about to experience. And yet he has to drink. Someone has to drink if you and I are to be saved. And only the Son of God can bear the weight of that cup and drink it to its dregs. And herein lies the irony. As Ralph Davis puts it in his Luke commentary on this passage, that the son of God's love must drink the cup of God's wrath. In order to satisfy God's wrath and redeem for himself a bride, Jesus must drink. And he's tasting the agony of all of it. The agony he must have felt, the anguish he must have felt. It's enough to knock Jesus on the ground. It's enough to cause him to cry out, if there's another way, Lord, let's go that route. Do I really have to drink this cup? I know that I have to drink this cup, but do I really have to drink this cup? Is there any other way? Dr. Ferguson and Dr. Thomas, in their book, *Iktho*, says they have a chapter on Jesus and Gethsemane. It'd be a great book to reflect upon in this holy week. They write Jesus crying out this way as if He's saying, Father, is there not some other way? I see the cross, I understand it now in a way that I could not have done in my human nature before now. But in my mind, in all of my affections, as I look down this dark and foreboding tunnel, is there not some other way? Oh, I wish there were, for I can hardly bear the thought of experiencing a sense of being God-forsaken. Jesus stands in the shadow of that reality, and he's undone by it. There's a disgust that he feels, there's a drink that he fears, and then there's a

desertion that he faces. Jesus has just been at supper with the 12, and he said that one of you will actually betray me. Judas has gone out to do his worst, and now he takes the other 11 into this garden to pray, and he positions eight of them over in a corner somewhere. Some would say that it was almost like a military positioning, but certainly it has this feel of a father saying, stay here a little bit further away from the battle where you're protected. And then he takes the three, James and Peter and John, his closest companions, a little bit closer to the battle, and says, stay here and watch and pray. And then he goes, his stones throw away. They can still hear him. They can still see him. He's not far away, and he's engaged in the battle of his life. And all he wants in the midst of that great trial is companionship, is human. He needs them to be with him. He longs for them to be with him. He desires for them to be with him. And here are these three who have seen him transfigured in glory now see him unraveling in humanity. They see him hurling himself to the ground. They're so distressed by what they've heard in the upper room and now what they've seen here of one distressed and troubled and bleeding profusely as if like blood or was he bleeding blood, as Luke says, in the midst of his greatest distress. And he seems to be coming undone. And all they can do, Luke says in his account, is sleep for sorrow. They sleep for sorrow. Ever been there? They fail here, yes. They didn't watch and pray. They weren't friends to Jesus the way they should have been, but don't you feel sympathy for them? Have you ever been there? Where you had an external trial that was so great that the thought of it coming down the pike in your life is unbearable and all you really want to do is sleep it off. Or what's worse is the internal trial that goes on within. the thoughts that rage within your mind and you just can't find a way to shut them off no matter what you do and all you can really do to shut them down is try to sleep and yet you're sleeping for sorrow. It's not good sleep, it's tough sleep and you're dreaming and you just can't shut it down but you wish you could just sleep and shut it all out. And that's where they are. And yet what Jesus needs is a friend. what he experiences as being completely alone in this battle. In fact, if you were to trace the Psalms, you can hear them sung on Jesus's lips, you can hear them prayed on Jesus's lips, and this would be a fitting time where perhaps he's praying a song of lament, like Psalm 69. Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in deep mire where there's no foothold. I've come into deep waters and the flood sweeps over me. I'm weary with my crying out. My throat is parched. My eyes grow dim with waiting

for my God. And then he says, I looked for pity, but there was none. And for comforters, but I found none. He has no one to stay awake with him in his darkest trial. He has no one to comfort him. He has no one to help him. He has no one to go to battle with him. No one's ever felt more alone. And yet it's worse. because there's a sense in which

Jesus is beginning to recoil as well at the sin that will be put upon his son, and it's as if all he can do is send an angel to comfort him, in Luke's version, but it's only an angel. And it doesn't bring him out

of the trial, and it doesn't remove the cup from him. In fact, right after the angel comes to comfort him is when Luke says, he was in agony and he sweat profusely like blood. And yet, all alone, he presses on, because he has a battle to fight. There's the disgust he feels, the drink he fears, the desertion he faces, and finally, the duel that he fights. There's a war going on in this garden the likes of the world has never seen. Between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, Jesus will crush his head soon, but in the garden is the opportune time. Remember when Satan had tempted

in the wilderness, and Luke says that when he was done tempting him, he went away for a more opportune time. Now is that opportune time, when Jesus is at his weakest moment. And the temptation is for Jesus to say, I'm the Son of God, I don't have to do this. They're not worth it. Give up. And you can almost hear Satan saying, when Jesus says, Father, if there's any other way, remove this cup from me, you can almost hear Satan saying, yes, I've got you right where I want you. You're ready for me to pounce. Jesus is engaged in the battle of a life. He's engaged with our great enemy, Satan. He's engaged with temptation.

He must overcome for the sake of the glory of his Father and the salvation of his people. He must resist temptation. He must, as the author of Hebrews says, be made perfect through obedience and suffering. Not in the sense that he wasn't perfect already, but that his work must be complete. He must finish the work. He can't stop now. Couldn't just talk obedience, he had to be obedient. And what we hear in this cry of, yet not my will but yours be done, is a cry of victory. It was a cry of staying the course instead of going his own way. Listen to what Donald MacLeod says here. This would be another great book for your reflection, Christ Crucified by Donald MacLeod. And this is a lengthy quote, but it's so good, I couldn't find a way to cut it into a sentence or two. He says, there will be pain indeed, and Jesus shrinks from that. There will be an awful loneliness, and He shrinks from that. There will be the viral and hellish demonic, and He shrinks from that. There'll be the dying and death and its taste, and He shrinks from that. But there will be

more, and it doesn't help that He doesn't yet know what in His human mind. The curse, what will that mean? The full ransom price, what will it mean? Forsaken by God, what does that mean? The thunder and lightning of unmitigated divine judgment condemning sin in his tiny, frail body, what will that mean? Gethsemane is apprehension. An apprehension of the awfulness

of what is still unknown. The imagination of Jesus fixes on it, but in its unfolding it will be even more dreadful than the worst forebodings of his imagination. And there it is besides the crushing weight of responsibility. So much hinges on him seeing this through. Suppose he fails. But Yosemite is more than the dread of suffering, it is itself suffering. Part of the road he had to walk, part of the price he had to pay, part indeed of the cup itself. His obedience included having to cope with the fear of death as well as death itself. And here is nowhere else Jesus is tested. Tested in his love, tested in his faith, tested in his courage. And here Satan shows him not all the kingdoms of the world, as in a previous temptation, but the full cost of his love. And here he presses home the questions, is it worth it? Are they worth it? That's what Jesus is facing in the garden for you. And what does Jesus do? He submits his human mind. He

submits his human affections. He submits his human desires and will to follow the Father. That in another garden, Adam, when faced with the prospect of everlasting life, says to the Father, not thy will, but my will be done. But in this garden, Jesus, when faced with death and the curse and the unmitigated wrath of God says, Not my will, but Thy will be done. He overcomes Eden in this moment. He must give up His body at the cross, but He submits His will here to the Father's will for His glory. Can you believe He would do this?

Can you believe He would go through this for you? The recoil of righteousness at your sin? the drinking of the cup of wrath

for your sin, the desertion of everyone and everything because of your sin, and the battle that he would win over Satan and temptation on your behalf. That's what he's doing in the

garden. What difference does it make for you? Do you recognize how much the father hates your sin and my sin? So much so that he would despise his own son and pour out his wrath upon him because he hates sin and has to deal with it. Do you recognize what your sin costs the Lord Jesus that he would become sin and drink wrath and feel abandoned and experience a battle like no other? And if you're not a believer

here tonight, the reality is that if you've ever been afraid before, it pales in comparison to the terror that you will experience when you stand before a holy God with nothing but your sins, now exposed and nowhere to run and nowhere to hide, and you will then fall down in distress and sorrow, unraveling, fearful unto death, wishing that you were dead, sweating as if blood, and you will then drink the wrath of God forever. That's the reality

if you're outside of Christ tonight. But for those who see the stain of sin, are poor in spirit, mourn over sin, and recognize a hunger and a thirst for Christ's righteousness to be given to you by faith, there only remains a cup of blessing, never a cup of wrath. and drink it to its dregs so that you might only ever experience the cup of blessing. And now you have a Savior who has entered into the heavens. Having made purification for sin, He sat down, His work finished at the right hand of the Father. And what does He do there? Now He lives to intercede for you. We don't have a high priest who's unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tested in every way, yet without sin. So that you might then draw near to Him for mercy and grace and time of need. When is that time of need? Anytime. Anytime that you need help. What a night to remember these truths. And perhaps for some of you, this would actually be the best night for you to trust in this glorious Savior for the first time in your life. that when you wake up on Sunday morning and you come back to worship with us, you come back not in the dread of the cup of wrath that you deserve to drink, but in resurrected life because of Christ Jesus. No one's ever fought for you like this, Jesus. No one's ever died for you like this, Jesus. No one's ever given a price like this for you, like this Jesus. He underwent the agony of hell for you so that you might always only enjoy the blessings of heaven in Him. What a tremendous Savior. What greater love could you know tonight than this love? Let's pray. Gracious God and most holy heavenly Father, we're undone. We've, we've, gone to a place that scares us. We've touched holiness tonight in a way that terrifies us. But what we've seen in this garden is a savior that would go to the end for us. And he would be willing to be abandoned completely. He would be willing to drink wrath fully. He would be willing to be up against sin and become sin for us willingly. And he would be willing to face down our greatest enemies of sin and Satan and the fear of death and overcome them in one fell swoop. We thank you for the way in which he fought for us and loves us and gave himself for us. And we ask that by your grace, we would love and worship and adore him and give ourselves for him from this day forward and forevermore. In Jesus name, amen.