

• *Luke emphasises prayer*

Jesus tells His disciples to pray

• *That they will be able to resist temptation*

• *Prayer – beforehand – a habit – not just an emergency response*

Jesus prays Himself

• *His custom*

• *Exploratory praying*

• *Submissive praying*

• *Huge personal cost*

• *Angelic help*

The disciples fail in their praying

• *Sleepy and unprepared*

• *It is good to set aside planned time for prayer*

Luke's Gospel, above all the other three, is the one that emphasises prayer.

Jesus tells His disciples to pray^{□1}. Difficult days are ahead for them. They must pray so as not to enter into temptation. 'Entering into temptation' means coming under the power of temptation, so that you do something you ought not to do. We do not pray that we shall not be tempted – because all Christians will face temptation. Temptation cannot be prayed away! Jesus speaks of not being led 'into' temptation, that is, not being taken into a situation in which we are not able to stand.

The praying has to be done before the time of temptation. Often we find ourselves under pressure to fall or to sin in some way, and at that point we begin to pray, 'Lord, don't let me fall.' That is all right, but it is not quite what Jesus has in mind here. It is like the story of the boy who was healed of a evil spirit in Mark 9:14–29. Jesus had already been praying when He cast out the demon (note verse 29). Prayer is to be a **habit** and not only something we do in an emergency! We can all pray in an emergency (like Nehemiah in Nehemiah 2:4), but we do not always know when the emergency is going to come.

Jesus prays Himself^{□1}. He did so as a matter of constant habit. We notice the words 'as was his custom' in 22:39. Jesus had had these times of prayer before. His praying is in privacy^{□2}, and with reverence^{□3}. He explores whether there might be another way of saving the world^{□3}, and yet comes to see that there is no other option than the cross. Your will be done', He says – knowing **now** that there is no other way open for him except the way of the cross. It is exploratory praying, and it is submissive praying. A revelation is given to Him as He prays; He sees that there is no way that the cross can be avoided.

Verse 44 shows us the greatness of what it cost Jesus to go to the cross. He began to feel the anger of God against sin. He was not afraid of a martyr's death; there was more to it than that.

Jesus' praying is answered but in God's way. The cup is not taken away but Jesus receives angelic help in drinking it^{□1}.

The disciples fail in their praying^{□1}. Sleepiness leads to failure. These disciples were not aware they were in any time of crisis, but those who were about to arrest Jesus were already on their way! The crisis, when they 'entered into temptation', would come upon them very suddenly. They had been warned by Jesus but they were not ready for the sudden time of testing. It was 'while Jesus was still speaking'^{□2} that a crowd arrived to arrest Jesus. Jesus had been warning them that a special time of testing and tempting was just about to come. They should have been specially prayerful before such a time arrived, but now it has arrived! It is important to have times of prayerfulness. A good plan is to set aside time every day (an hour?), time every week or month (a morning? an evening? a weekend?), and a time in the year (over the new year?). I make no rules, but in one way or another we have to have time to pray in order not to 'enter' into temptation when testing suddenly comes.

□1 22:39-40

□1 22:41-44

□2 22:41

□3 22:42

□1 22:43

□1 22:45-46

□2 22:47

Judas arrives – 5 groups

1. *The crowd – ignorant because they neglected to seek God's will*

• *Slow to learn*

• *Yet God is patient*

2. *Judas – the pretender*

3. *Officials – prejudiced towards anything new*

4. *The disciples – weak*

5. *Jesus – faithful in witness and prayer*

Judas arrives^{□1}. Perhaps the best way of considering these verses is to look at the five people or groups of people that are involved.

1. **There is the crowd.** They are relatively **ignorant**. I say 'relatively' ignorant because it is our responsibility to get to know God's will. Ignorance of His will is not an excuse that God will accept. On the judgement day we shall not be able to say, 'I did not know', because God will answer: 'But why did you not know?' We can seek to know God's will – and we ought to do so.

Yet we are slow to learn and God is patient with our slowness. A few weeks later Peter would talk to some of these people again under very different circumstances. 'This Jesus . . . you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men,' he would say to some of these very people, the common people of Jerusalem, some of whom were there when Jesus was arrested. They came to see how ignorant they were and cried out in distress^{□1}. Paul was once like this. He had opposed the gospel ignorantly and in unbelief^{□2}.

2. **There is Judas.** He is a different kind of person altogether. He is a **pretender**, getting into the small group of apostles because he thought he would be able to gain some advantage for himself.

3. **There are the officials**, who come to arrest Jesus. They are in official positions of authority and are **prejudiced** towards anything new. You should always feel slightly sorry for people in authority! When God is working and doing something unexpected, the ordinary people are often more open than those in positions of leadership and authority.



4. **There are the disciples.** They are characterised by great **weakness**. They are all just about to run away.

5. **Then – most important of all – there is Jesus.** What is Jesus doing? He is a faithful witness^{□1}. Only Jesus testifies to what is true and does what has to be done allowing Himself to be taken to the cross. Only Jesus is **faithful**. He had been faithful in prayer.

□1 22:47-53

□1 Acts 2:37
□2 1 Timothy 1:13-16

□1 Revelation 1:6

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