

• *To the Mount of Olives*

In our story it is now late **Thursday** night, perhaps at about what we would call 10 pm or 2200 hours. Jesus and His disciples are walking towards the Mount of Olives, which is a hillside not far outside the city walls of Jerusalem. As they are going along Jesus is talking to them.

A Faithful Saviour

1. We have a **Saviour who faithfully tells His disciples what is ahead**. Jesus again warns them of what is to happen. They will fall away from identifying themselves as His disciples. He Himself will be killed. They will be scattered. But He will rise again and even now He is giving them instructions that after His resurrection He will go ahead of them to Galilee^{□1}. Jesus wants them to have a knowledge of His faithfulness to them. Even after their desertion of Him, He will be faithful to them.

□1 14:27-28

Weak Disciples

• *Lack of awareness*

2. We have disciples who are **unaware of their weakness**. Peter especially is over-confident. None of Jesus' words at this point are taken seriously by the apostles. Only later will everything that Jesus says have meaning for them. They cannot accept the idea that He will die. They are utterly unbelieving concerning any resurrection in a few days' time. Peter insists that He will stand by Jesus, come what may^{□1}, yet Jesus insists that within a few hours Peter will deny knowing Him. Before dawn the denial will take place^{□2}. None of them will accept what is being said to them^{□3}.

□1 14:29

□2 14:30

□3 14:31

• *Source of weakness soon revealed*

3. **The source of their weakness is soon revealed**. Jesus invites the disciples to pray. He has things to pray about in which He will be alone; we never find Jesus praying with the disciples as if they were all equal. Jesus has a relationship to the Father that they do not have. He wants to pray, and He wants them to pray not far away. It is a great privilege, offered only to three of them^{□1}.

□1 14:32

He begins to pray for Himself. He is in great agony. He shares with the disciples the deep distress that is heavy upon Him as He draws near to the cross. It is literally killing Him. He asks then to 'watch', that is, to stay awake and pray^{□1}. He goes a little way away from them and begins to pray that if there is any other way for Him to go in saving the world, He might be allowed to go another way. Jesus is a man. He does not have a complete knowledge in His mind of everything that there is to be known. There might be a way of saving the world that He does not know about. If there is a way of avoiding the cross He would like to avoid it^{□2}.

□1 14:33-34

□2 14:35

• *Jesus prays intimately*

He prays very intimately with God, using His favourite term for God, 'Abba', the Aramaic word for 'Father'. Yet as He prays He knows that the cross is indeed the Father's desire for Him and He accepts it: '*not what I want but what you want*'^{□1}.

□1 14:36

• *A time to watch and pray*

In such a distressing time one might expect to find the disciples earnestly praying for God's help, but in fact they are sleeping^{□2}. The disciples are over-confident but they are prayerless. Jesus gently rebukes them. There are times when prayer must be put

□2 14:37

above sleep. Peter reckoned he would be willing to die with Christ but does not have the strength of will to stay awake with Christ for a few hours. They must 'watch'. They must have wakefulness of spirit, eagerness to see what is looming up on the horizon to do them damage. This kind of watchfulness is necessary for right praying. They must be 'clear-minded... so as to be able to pray'³. Jesus gives them this word of encouragement mixed with rebuke because there is still time. They might still get up and start praying and so rescue themselves from the dangers that are ahead.

³ 1 Peter 4:7

• **Temptation**

This kind of watchfulness and prayerfulness is necessary if they are to escape falling 'into' temptation, that is falling headlong under the power of temptation to such an extent that they become guilty of sin.

• **Tiredness hinders praying**

Jesus explains that their weakness in praying comes from weakness of the body. 'The flesh' in this context is evidently a reference to their physical frame. They are utterly tired, and their tiredness is hindering their praying.¹

¹ 14:38

Their weakness is all the more obvious when Jesus comes the second time and finds them overcome with sleep¹. They are ashamed and do not know what to say². When the same thing happens the third time³ Jesus says 'Are you still sleeping? Enough!'. The word translated 'Enough!' seems to have the sense 'I have given you sufficient warning, but now the opportunity for praying has gone by'⁴. Jesus knows the time for His arrest has come.

¹ 14:39–40a

² 14:40b

³ 14:41

⁴ 14:41

• **Jesus – a genuine man**

The amount of knowledge Jesus had was controlled by the Father. Jesus was a genuine man who did not carry unnecessary knowledge in His head. He could ask questions. Yet it is equally clear that the Father could give Him supernatural knowledge. Certainly Jesus was given a sure and certain knowledge of His approaching death. At this point in the story He can see late at night the lamps being carried by the party of soldiers who are coming to arrest Him. He calls the disciples to get up from their slumbers and come with Him to meet Judas and the soldiers who are approaching¹.

¹ 14:42

• **Ready to meet His hour**

Jesus was ready to meet His hour but the disciples were not. They had not believed Jesus' warnings, not heeded His call to watchfulness, and had been slack in prayerful preparation. The whole group go to meet the soldiers but only One of them is ready.



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