



Jesus' Prayer Before the Cross Luke 22:39-46

Introduction

Following the last meal with His disciples, Jesus prepared them for the cross with needed teaching and promises of fruitfulness through the power of *another Helper* (John 14:16) and prayer. Then He walked with them to the garden of Gethsemane where He agonized in prayer concerning the cross which loomed ahead.

Outline of Luke 22:39-46

- I. Upper Room Discourse - John 14
- II. Approaching Gethsemane- John 15-16
- III. Agonizing in Prayer - Luke 22:39-46

I. Upper Room Discourse - John 14

After the Lord's Supper, giving the bread and the cup to His apostles, Jesus used the last precious minutes in the upper room to give His farewell teaching and prepare them for the cross.

The record of this teaching is not found in the synoptic gospels but only in John 14-17. It is included because it is so important and is an integral part of Jesus' final hours with His disciples. The promises, as well as the preparation for the cross, in John 14,15 and 16, are Jesus' last will and testament to His apostles and to us as well. John 17 is His high priestly prayer which we will not cover because it is a special study in itself. However, the reader is encouraged to study it thoroughly.

"So Jesus sought to comfort and encourage them, not only for the hours immediately ahead of them, but for the unfolding years ahead. Indeed, He enveloped the centuries as He spoke to His followers until the end of time" (The Life and Times of Jesus, Herschel Hobbs).

- A. Jesus Announces His Departure - John 14:1-6

1. "Let not your heart be troubled" - 14:1

As they began to realize that Jesus was preparing them for His departure, the disciples were naturally anxious. Peter was told that before the cock crowed the next morning he would deny Jesus three times. How could that be? Judas had slipped out. Where had he gone? Jesus compassionately provided reassurance, "Let not your heart be troubled." We would say, "Settle down, everything will be all right." Are you troubled? Jesus whispers, "Peace, be still" (Mark 4:39).

2. "You believe in God, believe also in Me" - 14:1

They were to have the same faith in Him as they had in God.

3. "I go to prepare a place for you" - 14:2

Jesus assured them that He was going to His Father's house, where there are "many mansions". His purpose was to prepare a place for them, (and for us as well). "If it were not so," He said, "I would have told you." Heaven is a real place.

4. "I will come again and receive you to Myself" - 14:3

Jesus' departure was to their advantage. He promised to return for them (and for us). His desire is for us to be with Him. *The Lord Himself will descend from heaven....the dead in Christ will rise first....Then we who are alive will be caught up together with them.... thus we shall always be with the Lord* (1 Thessalonians 5:16-17). The apostle Paul adds, *Comfort one another with these words* (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

5. "Where I go you know, and the way you know"- 14:4

Jesus had often said He came from God and that faith was the way to be with Him.

6. Thomas' question - 14:5

Thomas, the doubter, interrupted, protesting that they did not know where He was going. How then, could they know the way?

7. Jesus' answer - 14:6-7

Jesus answered with a great "I AM" statement of His identity, one of several in John's gospel. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father but through Me." Have you come to the Father through Jesus? If you have not, will you do so now? If you have questions about this, please ask your discussion leader for a Disciplers' Assurance Letter. It explains how to be sure of your relationship to God through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Jesus went on to affirm that those who know Him also know the Father, and "from now on you know Him and have seen Him."

B. Seeing the Father in Jesus - John 14:8-14

1. Philip's question - 14:8

Philip took the Lord's statement literally, "*Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.*" He wanted to see the evidence.

2. Jesus' answer - 14:9

"*Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father.*" Jesus graciously corrected Philip, gently pointing out his error and explaining the evidence Philip was seeking. We are grateful for this, since we have not seen Jesus physically as he did. Jesus' answer is a definitive statement of His deity. Today we see Him by faith, and to see Him is to see the Father. Do you turn your eyes upon Jesus by faith?

3. Testimony of His words and works - 14:10-11

"*The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.*" The nature of God the Father in the Son of Man was evidenced in His words of authority and miraculous works. To know Christ is to know God. *He is the image of the invisible God* (Colossians 1:15). Jesus' works were His credentials.

C. Promises to Believers - John 14:12-21

1. Greater works - 14:12

"*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to the Father.*" What a staggering promise! We will do greater works than He did? Yes, in the power of the Holy Spirit, as did Dr. Billy Graham who preached to thousands more people than Jesus did. Also, many more have been healed in Jesus' name than were healed by Him when He was on earth.

2. Power in prayer - 14:13-14

"*Whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.*" This is the blank check of prayer signed by Jesus and subject only to the limitations of your faith and the Father's will. Have you cashed a check like this lately? Do you need to do so today?

3. The Holy Spirit - 14:13-18

Jesus promised to give a Helper, or Comforter, (the Greek word is "paraclete"). He abides with you and will be in you. The Holy Spirit was with the disciples in the person of Jesus. A new day would dawn at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit would dwell "in" them. In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit came upon people for particular tasks. Kings, priests, and prophets were anointed with oil as a picture of the Holy Spirit's anointing in order to do their work in the power of God. But the Holy Spirit did not indwell them permanently. Since Pentecost, He indwells every true believer permanently. Does He indwell you?

4. Promise of resurrection - 14:19

"*Because I live you will live also.*" We can look forward to being raised to everlasting life because Jesus overcame death. This promise includes the promise of His return in John 14:3.

5. Awareness of His love - 14:19-21

"*He who has my commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves me. And He who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.*" Do you want to be loved? Keep His commandments and you will experience His love. Although obedience is not a condition of God's love, it is evidence we realize His love and it demonstrates the reality of His presence. We will experience the reality of His love when we please Him by living in obedience to His Word. Obedience is evidence of our love and guarantees we will experience His love.

D. How Jesus Reveals Himself to Believers - John 14:22-31

1. Judas' question - 24:22

The other Judas, who was not Judas Iscariot, asked Jesus how He would reveal Himself to believers and not to the world? This was a reasonable question and showed he had been listening closely.

2. Jesus' answer - 14:23-27

Jesus' answer has three parts:

a. Keeping His words

First, Jesus will reveal Himself to those who love Him enough to keep His word. Do you love Him enough to study His words, found in the Bible, and obey them?

b. The Holy Spirit

Second, the Holy Spirit will continue to teach those who believe in Him and bring His words to their remembrance. Do you welcome the Holy Spirit's teaching as you study the Bible?

c. His peace

Third, whoever chooses to let Christ's peace rule in his or her heart by faith, refusing to give in to fear, becomes aware of His presence. Christ reveals Himself to them. Is faith your choice today?

E. Restatement of His Leaving - John 14:28-31

1. To regain His position

Again, Jesus told the disciples that He was going away. They should rejoice! While He was on earth, His Father was greater than He. In heaven they are equal. He told them beforehand so they would believe Him.

2. To defeat the ruler of this world

"The ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me." The battle between good and evil, light and darkness, was on display. At the cross it would be demonstrated for all time that the devil has no power over Jesus. The victory of Jesus over Satan is certain and of tremendous importance to us.

3. That the world may know

"That the world may know that I love the Father." The world knows nothing of real love. It is found only in Jesus. The cross revealed God's love for the world and the Son's love for the Father.

F. A Parting Hymn - John 14:31; Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26

"Arise, let us go from here" (John 14:31). *And when they had sung a hymn they went out to the Mount of Olives* (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26). Apparently, Jesus paused in His talk, they sang a hymn, and left the upper room. Minutes were passing and He desired to pray before the cross. When you plan your activities, do you make time for prayer?

II. Approaching Gethsemane- John 15-16

A. Promise of Fruitfulness - John 15:1-16

1. The vine - 15:1

Jesus continued teaching as they walked along, making every minute count. They may have passed by a vine

growing over a wall. The vine was a symbol of Israel and is still used as such by that nation (Isaiah 5:1-7). However, Jesus now declared Himself to be the vine. *"I am the true vine."* Israel as the vine had not born fruit.

2. The branches - 15:2-8

"You are the branches." Branches in the vine that do not bear fruit are removed. Fruitfulness, and not salvation, is the issue here. The purpose of the branch is to bear fruit. The apostle Paul feared becoming useless and being removed from service but he never doubted his salvation (1 Corinthians 9:27). Herschel Hobbs wrote, "This does not refer to a lost redemption, but to a lost opportunity" (*The Life and Times of Jesus*). Branches can only bear fruit by abiding in the vine. Branches must be attached and drawing their life from the vine. As long as they do, they will be fruitful. A branch does not struggle to bear fruit. It bears fruit because it is attached to the vine. Are you so attached to Christ and drawing your life from Him that fruit comes as a result? That fruit is to glorify the Lord, not us.

3. His command to love - 15:9-14

"This is My commandment, that you love one another." We show our love for God when we show love to His people. It is absolutely commanded by Jesus. How many of God's people believe you love God because they know you love them? We learn quickly that we do not naturally love everybody. Our human love is very limited. But we are able to love people as Jesus loved them when we see them with Jesus' eyes and serve them as His hands. Who needs your love today? How will you serve them with Jesus' love?

4. His appointment to bear fruit - 15:15-16

"No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends." Jesus was close to His friends. He calls us to a high status of intimacy with Him. *"You did not choose Me but I have chosen you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain."* He has chosen us, appointed us ("ordained" KJV), and promised us eternal fruit. Our part is to abide in Him, our true vine, and to love.

B. Promise of Persecution and Witness - John 15:18-27

1. The world's hostility - 15:18-25

Persecution seems to be a strange promise. Actually, it is a warning that the same world that hated and crucified Jesus will hate and persecute His followers. However, the blood of the martyrs has been the seed of

the church. God turns bad news into good news. The bad news is that the world neither understands nor wants the words of Jesus. The good news is that as His word is spread, the worst persecutors can become the best believers, as did the apostle Paul.

2. The Spirit's witness - 15:26-27

"*The Spirit of truth...will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness because you have been with Me from the beginning.*" This promise was to the apostles, but it is for us also. After His resurrection, Jesus said we would be witnesses in the whole world through the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).

C. Promise of Spiritual Power - John 16:1-15

John 16 gives details concerning the Holy Spirit. He is a *Helper* sent by the Father (John 14:16). He is the *Spirit of truth* who permanently lives within believers (John 14:17). He works through those who are Christ's in the following ways:

1. Convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment - 16: 8-12.
2. Guiding them into all truth and revealing things to come - 16:13.

He does this by illuminating God's Word, enlightening our intellects, and stimulating our emotions and will to understand God's Word.

3. Glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ - 16:14

He glorifies Christ and not Himself. Jesus Christ is the person to whom we relate because He was a human being like us.

D. Promise of Victory - John 16:16-33

Jesus' final words to the disciples addressed the sorrow they were about to experience in His crucifixion and death, and the joy that would follow because of His resurrection. His disciples said, "*See, now You are speaking plainly.*" They said they understood and gave a very proper doctrinal statement, "*By this we believe that You came forth from God*" (16:30). Jesus told them they would be scattered that very night and leave Him alone. But He was telling them these things so they would have His peace and victory. "*Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world*" (16:33). Jesus bequeathed to the disciples His own gift of life: the Holy Spirit, power in prayer, and love.

III. Agonizing in Prayer - Luke 22:39-46; Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14: 32-42; John 18:1.

A. Place of Prayer - Luke 22:39

1. A familiar place

The apostles knew the Mount of Olives well. It was a familiar place opposite Jerusalem and across the Kidron valley. It was around midnight when they arrived. The Mount of Olives is elevated somewhat and affords a spectacular view of the city while offering quiet and seclusion. It was Christ's custom to go there to be alone with His Father (Luke 22:39). Judas knew the place, for Jesus sometimes took his disciples there to escape the crowds (John 18:2). Do you have such a place, indoors or outdoors, however small?

2. A pleasant place - John 18:1

The tall thick-trunked olive trees shielded the Savior from curious eyes. It was a garden, planted with various shrubs and flowers. It is still a pleasant place with gnarled olive trees, some of which may be 2000 years old and may have been there in Jesus' time.

Although Jesus needed to pray alone with His Father, He took Peter, James, and John farther with Him than the rest of the disciples. They were already leaders among the disciples and needed to learn that leadership is more than just a privilege. Leaders go farther in prayer and lead others in prayer. Is prayer a priority in your life? Are you a leader of others? Do you pray even more than you expect others to pray?

3. Prayer support

"*Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation.*" Jesus desired prayer support, but He also knew the disciples needed prayer for themselves. Jesus also calls us to pray with Him today. Can He count on you to be faithful in prayer for the things that are supremely important to Him? Do you pray as He taught us, "*Lead us not into temptation*" (Matthew 6:13)?

B. Position of Prayer - Luke 22:41

1. Kneeling - Luke 22:41

Jesus knelt as a posture of concentration and submission. Body language says much about one's attitude. What does your body language say about you? If Jesus knelt, and Paul knelt, are you too proud or too casual to kneel (Acts 20:36)?

2. Fell on His face on the ground - Matthew 26:37-39; Mark 14:35

The Savior's prayer was intense, absorbing Him totally. The words to describe it are very strong. *He began to be sorrowful, and deeply distressed. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death"* (Matthew 26:37-38). *And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly* (Luke 22:44). The word "Gethsemane" means "olive press" and the Lord was under pressure as He became the bearer of our sin, *and not for ours only, but also for the whole world* (1 John 2:2).

C. Personal Relationship of Prayer - Luke 22:42; Matthew 26:39; Mark 14:36

1. Father

"Father", (Mark) "O My Father" (Matthew), "Abba, Father" (Luke) - "Daddy" is His desperate cry. He taught us to pray, "Our Father" (Matthew 6:9). Prayer presupposes a relationship with the One to whom you pray. Have you taken the time to know Him personally and to trust Him, so you can go to Him as your own Father?

2. Praise - Mark 14:36

"Father, all things are possible for You." Our Lord began by remembering who God is and what He can do.

D. Purpose of Prayer - Luke 22:42

"If it is possible." Jesus was saying, "if You are willing" (Matthew 26:39). Was this a struggle of wills? No! Jesus had come to earth for this very reason. Nevertheless, He asked if there was any other way to save sinful people.

"Take this cup away from Me." Jesus was not trying to avoid the cross, but rather agonized over becoming sin. He who had never sinned, nor felt guilt and shame, would soon bear in His body the guilt and shame of every dope peddler, blasphemer, liar, murderer, adulterer, pornographer, abortionist, thief, and gossip who ever lived. Is it any wonder He was repulsed?

Christ surrendered His human will. He embraced God's will. "Not My will but Yours be done."

E. Persistence in Prayer - Luke 22:43-44

1. Three attempts to rouse the disciples - Matthew 26:44

Three times Jesus prayed, progressing in petition. First, He prayed that the cup would pass from Him if

possible. The second and third times He prayed, "*If this cup cannot pass away from Me, unless I drink it, Your will be done*" (Matthew 26:42). Between each prayer He went out to the disciples and found them sleeping. Is this how He finds you?

2. Angelic assistance

By God's grace, an angel from heaven appeared to strengthen Him.

3. Sweat and blood

Dr. Luke notes that Jesus sweat drops of blood. So great was His effort in prayer that the blood pushed through His pores and mingled with His sweat, breaking blood vessels and mottling His face.

F. Peace through prayer - Luke 22:45-46

The last time Jesus went to the disciples He said, "*Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners*" (Matthew 26:45).

It was time for them to rise, for the betrayer and his cohorts in unholy alliance were approaching with swords and clubs to arrest the Son of God. He was at peace and ready (Mark 14:41-42).

Applications

1. What is God's will for you which you have discovered through prayer?
2. How will you make time for the kind of prayer that gives you peace in crisis?
3. Are you abiding in the Vine by daily drawing your strength from Him in prayer and Bible study? How much time do you set aside for this?
4. How are you allowing the Holy Spirit to witness through your life and words?
5. How do you show the love of God to others, especially other believers who need comfort and encouragement?

QUESTIONS

Questions are based on the New King James Version of the Bible.

DAY ONE: Read lesson notes and references.

1. a. Which of Christ's promises in John 14-16 do you think were most important to the apostles at that time?

b. Which promises are most important to you? Why?
2. In what way or ways is our Lord's prayer in Gethsemane:
 - a. An example of prayer?
 - b. An encouragement to prayer?
 - c. A new way of praying?
3. What will you change in your life because of the lesson on Jesus' promises and prayer?

DAY TWO: Read Luke 22:52-62 and John 18:12-18.

4. a. What was Jesus' question to the priests and elders?

b. How did He answer His own question?

c. According to Matthew 26:53-54, what was an additional answer?
5. a. Where was Jesus taken as a prisoner?

b. How did Peter and John try to stay with Him?
6. a. Who first questioned Peter? What did he answer?

b. Who questioned him next? What did he answer?

c. What did Peter say the third time he was questioned?

d. What do you think made Peter weep?

DAY THREE: Read Luke 22:63-71; Matthew 26:59-69; Mark 14:55-65.

7. How many witnesses were found who had charges against Jesus? (See Matthew 26:59-61.)

8. What was the final charge against Him?

9. a. By comparing the three gospels, what was the only “defense” He made?

b. Why was He accused of blasphemy?

10. a. How was Jesus mistreated which was contrary to the law?

b. How was He mocked?

c. How did these words and actions fulfill Isaiah 53:2-3?

d. At what time of day did this occur? See Matthew 27:1; Luke 22: 66.

DAY FOUR: Read Luke 23:1-5; Mark 15:1-5; John 18:28-38.

11. a. Where was Jesus taken next? Why?

b. Why did Jesus’ Jewish accusers refuse to enter Pilate’s palace?

12. What reason did the Jewish leaders give for bringing Jesus to Pilate?

13. a. What question did Pilate ask Jesus?

b. How did Jesus answer Pilate in an attempt to win him?

c. Give Pilate’s response to Jesus.

d. Give Pilate’s response to the Jewish leaders.

e. Give the leaders’ response to Pilate.

DAY FIVE: Read Luke 23:6-12.

14. Where was Jesus taken next?

15. How did Herod think and act toward Jesus?

16. a. How did Jesus answer Herod?

b. From the following Scripture passages, why do you think Jesus did this?

Matthew 14:1-10

Luke 9:7-9

Luke 13:31-32

c. What did Herod do with Jesus?

DAY SIX: Read Luke 23:13-25.

17. What was the official Roman judgment on Jesus (Luke 23:14-15)?

18. Why did Pilate refuse to let Him go?

19. How did Pilate try to appease the Jews? How did it backfire?

20. a. In John 19:1-6, what did Pilate do that was illegal to do to an uncondemned prisoner?

b. ? (Thought Question) How many times and by how many people was Jesus declared innocent?