

The Sleeping Disciples

Portraits of Repentance

Matthew 26:36-46

EXPLORING THE SERMON

- * What did you hear?
- * What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- * What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

KEY VERSES

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." ³⁷ He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee and began to be grieved and agitated. ³⁸ Then he said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me." ³⁹ And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me, yet not what I want but what you want." ⁴⁰ Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, "So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? ⁴¹ Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial;^[i] the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." ⁴² Again he went away for the second time and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." ⁴³ Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. ⁴⁵ Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Now the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ Get up, let us be going. Look, my betrayer is at hand."

So far in this series, we've had a chance to relate to Caiaphas and how operating in the shadows prevents us from flourishing; and then we've looked for Judas in ourselves as we reflected on our own experiences of betrayal. **How have you seen yourself in these first two characters, and what invitations has God provided you to repent these last few weeks?**

This week we place ourselves in the minds of the disciples. Jesus has retreated to the Garden of Gethsemane, outside Jerusalem, awaiting the lynch mob. Knowing His time is short, He simply asks them to "stay awake and pray" with Him. It seems impossible to us that this would be their reaction, but so often we too miss significant events in our lives because we focus on the wrong things, or we simply don't know how to respond to our friends when they are going through an incredibly difficult time. **What gets you distracted? What significant events or opportunities to care for others have you missed because you've focused on the wrong things?**

The God of the universe wants nothing more than to be with His friends and pray with Him. This is precisely what makes our faith so unique is that it is built on a person, not rules. What God wants more than anything for us, too, is to spend time with Him, to cultivate a relationship with Him, and to see the

world the way He does. **How might this help you view Lent differently? Instead of focusing on what we might give up, what new rhythms can you take up that can draw you closer to Him? Pray about the choices you will make this week that will help you focus on what is also important to God, that you don't miss the significant invitations that He might have for you. Start with the Lord's Prayer, and really sit with the words as you make them your own.**