“The Questions Jesus Asked” Part 2
Mount of Olives | November 8, 2026 | Matthew 26:36-39
Pastor John Steward

Prayer of the Day
Lord Jesus, we are overwhelmed with gratitude as we acknowledge that You fully understand and empathize with us in our suffering and temptation. Help us to rest in this knowledge as we experience this life. In Your name we pray, Amen.

Scripture Reading

Matthew 26:36-39
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." He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me." 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."

Message Notes

Matthew 26:36-39
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Matthew 26:40-46
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? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again he went away for the second time and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand."

Matthew 27:45-47
From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.
And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah."

Study Questions – Read Matthew 26:36-46

ICEBREAKER – Getting started:

1. When you are facing something difficult or stressful, what is your typical response? Do you talk to someone, withdraw, stay busy, or try to handle it yourself?
2. Have you ever faced a situation where you knew what you wanted, but ultimately had to accept that things might turn out differently? What was that experience like?
3. Who is someone you turn to when life gets difficult? What is it about that person that makes you feel comfortable sharing your struggles?

Based on Matthew 26:36-46, answer the following questions:

OBSERVATION – What does the text say?

1. As you read Matthew 26:36-46, what comes to mind? What stands out? What is interesting to you and why?
2. In one sentence, how would you summarize this text?
3. What lesson or message do you think the author is trying to convey?

INTERPRETATION – What does the text mean?

1. What do we learn about Jesus' emotional and spiritual condition as He enters the Garden of Gethsemane? What words does Matthew use to describe how Jesus is feeling (vv. 37–38)?
2. Jesus tells Peter, James, and John, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death." What does this reveal about Jesus' humanity? Why is it important for us to recognize that Jesus experienced deep emotional pain?
3. Why do you think Jesus asks Peter, James, and John to stay with Him and keep watch? What does this tell us about the importance of Christian community and having others walk alongside us during difficult seasons?
4. In verse 39, Jesus prays, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me." What does the cup represent? Why do you think Jesus is asking for it to be taken away?
5. Jesus follows His request with the words, "Yet not as I will, but as you will." What does this tell us about the relationship between Jesus' desires and His willingness to submit to the Father's will?
6. What can we learn from the fact that Jesus openly expresses His fear, sorrow, and desires to the Father? Does surrendering to God mean we cannot be honest about what we are feeling or what we want?
7. Jesus returns to find His disciples sleeping. Why do you think they struggled to stay awake? What does Jesus mean when He says, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (v. 41)?
8. Jesus prays three times, repeating His request to the Father. What does this teach us about persistence in prayer? Is it wrong to bring the same concerns and requests to God repeatedly?
9. Notice that Jesus doesn't receive the answer He initially desires, yet He continues moving forward with the Father's plan. What does this teach us about trusting God when His answer isn't what we hoped for?
10. How does Jesus' experience in Gethsemane help us understand Hebrews 4:15, which tells us that Jesus is able to sympathize with our weaknesses because He was tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin?
11. In verse 45, Jesus tells the disciples, "Look, the hour has come." What has changed in Jesus between His first prayer and this moment? What do you think His time in prayer accomplished?

12. Jesus concludes by saying, "Rise! Let us go!" Knowing what awaits Him, what does this reveal about His trust in the Father and His willingness to fulfill His mission?

APPLICATION – How can you apply the text?

1. Being honest with God: Jesus didn't hide His feelings from the Father. He brought His sorrow, fear, and desires directly to Him. Are there things you have been hesitant to bring to God in prayer? What would it look like to be completely honest with Him?
2. Surrendering our will: Most of us have things we desperately want God to change, fix, or take away. Is there an area of your life where you are struggling to pray, "Not my will, but yours"? What makes surrender difficult?
3. Trusting when life doesn't make sense: Sometimes God doesn't answer our prayers the way we hope or expect. How do you maintain your faith and trust in God's goodness when His answer is different from what you wanted?
4. The importance of community: Jesus invited His closest friends to be with Him during His darkest hour. Are you allowing others to walk alongside you during difficult seasons? Who might God be inviting you to encourage, support, or simply sit with during their struggles?
5. Moving forward in faith: After praying, Jesus got up and faced what was ahead of Him. Is there a difficult situation, decision, or challenge you have been avoiding? What might it look like to move forward in faith, trusting God to walk with you?