

# ENDURING DIFFICULTY

## The Garden of Gethsemane

Boy Scouts motto: "Be Prepared"

Question to be answered today: **How do we prepare for difficult moments?**

- How can we prepare our souls to make it through trying times?
- How can we prepare our minds to remain clear and peaceful in the face of challenge and chaos?

Last few weeks:

- Triumphal entry into Jerusalem
- Passover

Today: Garden of Gethsemane – Jesus's prayers before he is betrayed

What's coming?

- Jesus' trial and crucifixion
- Jesus knows what is coming... but no one else does
- What Jesus is doing in this Garden is preparing himself and his disciples for something tremendously difficult

This is still true today: you may be caught off guard, but Jesus is not

### **Mark 14:32-49**

"Keep watch and pray"

- Parenting motto: "Do what you have to do, then you can do what you want to do"
- My primary goal as a parent is not to make them happy in the moment but to prepare them for the future
- Similarly: Jesus knows every moment of your life (Psalm 139)

*How do we prepare for difficult moments?*

### **We keep watch**

- The disciples needed to keep watch—not to stay awake, but to be aware of their weaknesses: the internal condition of their hearts, and the external activity of his betrayers
- God doesn't want you to follow a rule; He wants you to pay attention to what is happening in you and around you so that you aren't ever caught off guard

**1 Peter 5:8-9** *"Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are."*

We have to pay attention to what's happening around us AND what is happening within us

- Sometimes our hearts blind us to things we would see if we were healthier
- **1 Timothy 4:16** *"Keep a close watch on how you live and on your teaching. Stay true to what is right for the sake of your own salvation and the salvation of those who hear you."*

What do we watch?

- **Watch your heart**
  - Our enemy doesn't get access to our lives through external circumstances, but through internal attitudes
  - *Matthew 5, Proverbs 4:23*
- **Watch your habits**
  - Your current habits are forming your future identity
  - *1 Timothy 4:7-8*
- **Watch your thoughts**
  - Your thoughts shape your beliefs, and your beliefs dictate your actions
  - *Isaiah 26:3, Philippians 4:8-9*
  - AI doesn't know the God we know!

How else do we prepare for difficult moments?

**We pray**

- The disciples needed to pray, not to change what was going to happen, but to endure what was about to happen with faith

We need a shift in our prayer focus:

- Not "change this," but "change me"
- Not "get me out of this," but "use me while I'm in this"

How do we pray?

- **Pray with faith**
  - Jesus: "Father, everything is possible for you."
  - **Hebrews 11:1** *"Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see."*
  - *Romans 12:12*
- **Pray with surrender**
  - Jesus: "Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."

- **Romans 5:2-5** *"Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory. We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love."*
- Faith and surrender are not mutually exclusive

So... how do we endure difficult moments?

- We keep watch, we pray...
- ...but what does Jesus do?

### **Jesus returns**

- The disciples failed repeatedly, but Jesus still kept coming back to them
- The grace of God covers all of our failures, mistakes, pain, and inability
- *Romans 5:6-8, Ephesians 2:1-10*

**Isaiah 28:16** *"Therefore, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: "Look! I am placing a foundation stone in Jerusalem, a firm and tested stone. It is a precious cornerstone that is safe to build on. Whoever believes need never be shaken."*

- We don't endure difficulty through our willpower, our commitment, our discipline, our strength, our good intentions, our moral high ground...
- We are able to endure difficulty through God's faithfulness and grace
  - Peace, joy, hope, and love that endures isn't something you earn; it is something you receive

### **What is keeping you from receiving God's grace today?**

- Heart (confession of your attitude)
- Habits (adjustment to your activity)
- Thoughts (redirection of your beliefs)
- Faith (hope in God's character)
- Surrender (trust in God's plan)