

24 Hours That Changed the World by Adam Hamilton
Session 2- The Garden of Gethsemane

Session Goals:

- Explore the Gospel's account of Jesus' anguished prayer in the garden of Gethsamane;
- Examine the reasons behind Jesus' agony and how those explanations inform our understanding of Jesus' humanity and divinity in the context of the Passion;
- Consider our own experiences of despair and self-doubt and our struggle to recognize and accept God's will for us in light of Jesus' experience at Gethsemane.

Opening Prayer -

Out of my distress I called on the Lord; the Lord answered me and set me in a broad place. With the Lord on my side I do not fear. What can mortals do to me? . . . I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the Lord . . . I was pushed hard, so that I was falling, but the Lord helped me. The Lord is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation. (Psalm 118:5-6, 17, 13-14)

Biblical Foundation

*When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives . . . They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. And he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake." And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if possible, the hour might pass from him. **Jesus said, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet not what I want, but what you want."** He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him. He came a third time and said to them, "**Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.** (Mark 14:26, 32-42)*

Watch the Video (6:57 minutes)

Questions for Discussion -

- When have you been unable to "stay awake," pay attention, or follow through when you felt Jesus most needed you?
- What significance do you see in the fact that two of the Bible's most profound temptation stories take place in a garden?
- What words would you want to pray if you were kneeling, right now, before the stone in the Church of All Nations?

Bible Study and Discussion:

Read Joel 2:28-3:12

28 "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. **29** Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. **30** I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. **31** The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. **32** And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, even among the survivors whom the LORD calls..... **Chapter 3** **1** "In those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, **2** I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will put them on trial for what they did to my inheritance, my people Israel, because they scattered my people among the nations and divided up my land. **3** They cast lots for my people and traded boys for prostitutes; they sold girls

for wine to drink. **4** “Now what have you against me, Tyre and Sidon and all you regions of Philistia? Are you repaying me for something I have done? If you are paying me back, I will swiftly and speedily return on your own heads what you have done. **5** For you took my silver and my gold and carried off my finest treasures to your temples. **6** You sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks, that you might send them far from their homeland. **7** “See, I am going to rouse them out of the places to which you sold them, and I will return on your own heads what you have done. **8** I will sell your sons and daughters to the people of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, a nation far away.” The LORD has spoken. **9** Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare for war! Rouse the warriors! Let all the fighting men draw near and attack. **10** Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weakling say, “I am strong!” **11** Come quickly, all you nations from every side, and assemble there. Bring down your warriors, LORD. **12** “Let the nations be roused; let them advance into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the nations on every side.

- The prophet Joel describes God’s final judgment of the nations as taking place in the same area (Kidron or the Valley of Jehoshaphat) where Jesus journeyed on his way to Gethsamane and ultimately the cross. What insights does that connection give you as you consider Jesus’ agonizing over his mission in Gethsamane?

Read Psalm 116

1 I love the LORD, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy. **2** Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live. **3** The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came over me; I was overcome by distress and sorrow. **4** Then I called on the name of the LORD: “LORD, save me!” **5** The LORD is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion. **6** The LORD protects the unwary; when I was brought low, he saved me. **7** Return to your rest, my soul, for the LORD has been good to you. **8** For you, LORD, have delivered me from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling, **9** that I may walk before the LORD in the land of the living. **10** I trusted in the LORD when I said, “I am greatly afflicted” **11** In my alarm I said, “Everyone is a liar.” **12** What shall I return to the LORD for all his goodness to me? **13** **I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD.** **14** **I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people.** **15** Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his faithful servants. **16** Truly I am your servant, LORD; I serve you just as my mother did; you have freed me from my chains. **17** I will sacrifice a thank offering to you and call on the name of the LORD. **18** I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people, **19** in the courts of the house of the LORD— in your midst, Jerusalem. Praise the LORD.

- Remember that this is one of the psalms traditionally sung after the Passover meal. Imagine Jesus singing the psalm and coming to verse 13: “I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord.” What do you think Jesus understood this to mean for him?

Read Luke 4:1-13

4 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, **2** where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry. **3** The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.” **4** Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone.’” **5** The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. **6** And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. **7** If you worship me, it will all be yours.” **8** Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’” **9** The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here. **10** For it is written: “‘He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; **11** they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’” **12** Jesus answered, “It is said: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” **13** When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

- What connections do you see between Jesus’ three temptations in the wilderness and his three prayers at Gethsamane?

Read Hebrews 5:7-9

7 During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. 8 Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered 9 and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him

- What insight about Jesus' Gethsemane experience does the writer of Hebrews want believers to understand?

Wrapping Up In Perspective

To conclude the session, ask group members to consider and discuss one or more of the following perspectives. For the painting of Gauguin's *Agony in the Garden*, google it or print out a color copy and display it or pass it around for the group to see.

IN AN OLIVE GROVE

Imagine yourself before an expansive, ancient olive tree, its gnarled branches casting shadows at your feet. Looking through the branches, you can just make out the wall of the Temple gleaming in the moonlight. Somewhere you can hear a voice praying. What else do you hear? What else do you see? What thoughts are running through your mind?

INSIDE THE HEART OF JUDAS

Imagine that you are Judas. You have just kissed your friend Jesus for the last time, and in doing so you have condemned him to death. You can see the soldiers shoving Jesus on ahead of them, out of the garden. You are alone. Your fellow disciples have fled in the night. You collapse against the trunk of the tree. You can see the impressions on the ground where Jesus must have been praying. What do you feel now?

IN FRONT OF GAUGUIN'S *AGONY IN THE GARDEN*

The French painter Paul Gauguin is probably best known for his series of primitivist studies of Tahitian life, characterized by simple but vibrant color. In his depiction of Jesus at Gethsemane, notice that the background of dark greens and blues includes several full trees and two figures dressed in black. Most striking is the vivid orange color of Jesus' hair, which immediately draws your attention to his face. Look carefully at Jesus' expression, the position of his hands, and the placement of the bare tree immediately behind him. What emotion do you think the artist is conveying? What might be the piece of paper Jesus is holding? What is the purpose of the bare tree? How does Gauguin's image of the Gethsemane story compare with your own?

Sharing Joys & Concerns

Closing Prayer

Now may the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, make you complete in everything good so that you may do his will, working among us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 13:20-21)