

Mark 14:32-42

Maundy Thursday 2009

April 9, 2009

They had never seen Jesus like this before. Peter, James, John,

They were the three disciples Jesus had chosen to go with him into the room where there was the dead body of a twelve year old girl. Outside people were weeping and wailing. Jesus had questioned the weepers and wailers,

"Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." The crowd laughed at him. Peter and James and John were there when Jesus said to the dead girl, "Talitha cum" which means "Little girl, get up!"

Immediately she got up and began to walk about. Everyone there was overcome with amazement.

But they had never seen Jesus like this before.

Peter, James and John had climbed up the high mountain apart with Jesus where Jesus' clothing became dazzling white and Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus. They had been there when the cloud had overshadowed them all and out of the cloud a voice spoke, "This is my Son, the Beloved, listen to him!" They had been there to see and hear all of that.

But they had never seen Jesus like this before.

Along with Andrew, Peter and James and John were with Jesus outside of the temple when he told them of what was to come – how the temple would be destroyed and of a time of suffering that was coming on the world and the day when the angels will be sent out to gather the elect from the four winds.

But they had never seen Jesus like this before.

Jesus who had calmed the storm and walked on the water – Jesus who had always been in charge began to be distressed and agitated. Jesus said to them, "I am deeply grieved even to death; remain here and pray." They watched him go a little farther and throw himself on the ground in prayer. This is what he prayed, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet not what I want but what you want."

Three times he had told his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, be betrayed, arrested, killed and on the third day rise. But now he is not sure. ^{in Bethany three times} Three times he prays that there might be another way.

How could it be that Jesus is so upset? Is he not God's Son – does he not know all things? Yet he prays that there might be another way.

Jesus struggled there in the garden. It gives me hope to know this. In my mind I know that God will see us through whatever challenges come to us. In my mind I know that whatever happens God will give us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. In my mind I know that nothing in all creation shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord but knowing this does not mean that faith is without struggle. Jesus trusted that the Father in heaven would have the last word and that word would be life. Still he struggled. He said he was deeply grieved, even to death.

He told the disciples to pray. And that is exactly what he did. He opened up his heart to God – pleaded that there might be another way – prayed that God's will would be done in him.

Not once, but three times.

When you are upset and struggling – pray. Pour out your heart to God – ask what is in your heart and mind – pray that what God wants will be what you do – what happens to you. Again and again open your heart to God – open your self to seek God's will.

Sometimes I have taught that Jesus did not get what he prayed for. The cup did not pass from him. Yet as we hear the story of his arrest and trials, the story of his crucifixion we sense the strength that he was given, the help. He did not revile those who mocked him, he did not turn from the truth in order to save his own skin. In faith he walked the road the Father had set before him. *He didn't get what he prayed for but he did what he needed.*

Begin with prayer. Always begin with prayer.

Pray for God's will.

Pray for love from God – love for God, love for friend and enemy in you.

Pray for strength and hope and life.

If you should struggle, even falter and fall remember Jesus in the garden – and Jesus crying out Godforsaken on the cross but even more remember Easter morning.

God does have the last word. For Jesus – for you. Amen.