

Through the Storm – Week 1
Gethsemane
Matthew 26:36-56

Introduction:

When was a time you felt afraid, alone, and anxious? Where did you turn for hope during that time?

In what ways could you use your experiences with God's faithfulness to share God's goodness with those around you?

Discuss:

1. THROUGH THE STORM: *"God doesn't take us around the storm but through the storm"*

This begins the "passion" narrative. "Passion narrative" is used primarily to refer to the accounts given in the gospels of the suffering and death of Jesus. Generally, scholars start the passion narratives as beginning with Jesus' agony and arrest in Gethsemane and conclude it with his burial. **The garden of Gethsemane.** The group proceeds to a garden or wooded area on the western slopes of the hillside known as the Mount of Olives. The Mount of Olives (Olivet), with its spectacular view of the Temple Mount, stands just east of Jerusalem across the Kidron Valley. Jesus and his disciples regularly crossed over Olivet on their way from Jerusalem through Bethphage (Luke 19:29) to Bethany (John 11:1), which lay on the mountain's eastern slope. The traditional site of Gethsemane lies on Olivet's western slope (v.36).

Gethsemane means oil press and was an area filled with groves of olive trees, many of them owned by well-to-do Jerusalemites.

Ask:

When have you personally felt like God had you "in the place of the press?"

Have there been times in your own life where you felt like God wasn't listening to you? If so, what made you think he was not listening to your prayers?

2. God is doing more through the storm than you might ever know!

Jesus is pleading with us to pay attention; something big is going down. (v.40/41) “he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, “So, *could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation!* Jesus goes to God in prayer. Jesus gets alone with the father and he encourages the disciples to do likewise. Ligon Duncan: “One of the things that Luke wants us to get out of this passage is [also] a very important principle for the Christian life — to stay awake and always pray.” Why should we pray? - Luke 22:40b, 46c tells us to “*pray that you will not fall into temptation.*” Jesus shifts the focus of attention away from His own struggle and temptation to the disciples’ need to pray in order to be victorious in their own struggles and temptations. Jesus means especially the testing that they are about to endure.

Ask:

When have you had a difficult time praying about something that God didn’t seem to hear?

When are you tempted to give up on God’s timing? What may make it difficult for you to wait on God when you feel anxious and afraid?

3. This storm is bigger than you!

Your storm is not arbitrary. Even the storms in life are not a happenstance. Suffering is part of God’s plan (Rom 8:17) (v.39/42/44) My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.” ...for the second time, he went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.” He went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again.” Jesus met suffering head on. Everything was leading up to this point. Jesus proceeded on the way to the cross just as predicted. The passion portrays Jesus’ humanity. “James Edwards paraphrase: The grim realism of Gethsemane is a guarantee of its historical authenticity. Early Christians would not have invented a story of such torment.”

Ask:

Jesus said “In this world you will have trouble.” Why is it so easy for us to get frustrated when trouble comes even though it has been promised to us?

Even if God feels distant from you, what could you do to live in faith that he is listening and able to help you?

What would it look like for you to rest in the assurance of your faith in Jesus over your present circumstance?

4. It's ok to ask God to take us around the storm. We should ask God to remove suffering.

When we do not know God's will specifically, we can voice our request, but we should always submit our preferences to God's will. Jesus' prayer may help to explain why prayer is important. Jesus honestly displays his innermost thoughts and asks if the cup of wrath might pass by him, but the heart of his prayer shows a commitment to follow God's will. The major lesson of this passage is openness in sharing one's heart with God but also recognizing his sovereignty. The passion shows Jesus as a real man. The plea of Jesus suggests that he is genuinely tempted to forsake the role of the suffering servant. James R. Edwards says, "*What profound irony Gethsemane conceals, for when Jesus feels most excluded from God's presence he is in fact.*"

Ask:

Share about a time that God showed up and showed out in your storm.

Are you walking in a storm right now that you are asking God to remove from your life? If so, share about it.

Pastor Brady's final 2 points were: Storms create a longing for home, and storms pass. Which of these resonates with you the most?

In what ways have you felt like Jesus—abandoned, surrounded by enemies, and struggling to find hope?

How can you trust God with the storms that are in front of you?

Close in prayer