



Kirknewton and East Calder Parish Church of Scotland

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29 March 2010

Reflection

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Reading: Luke 22: 39-45

Luke tells us a different version of the same story in Matthew and Mark. His abbreviated account has eliminated a number of details like the name of the “place” and also details of the disciples that went with him to pray. Luke most probably assumed that everyone knew the name of the “place” where Jesus retired to. Matthew and Mark tell us it was the garden of Gethsemane which meant “oil-press”, the name of an olive-yard at the foot of the Mount of Olives.

It was a garden East of Jerusalem beyond the Kidron valley. There are four hills East of Jerusalem which form a ridge running in a North Southern direction. The Mount of Olives refers only to the central pair of these hills directly east of the temple area.

Jesus and his disciples may have arrived at Gethsemane by 10 or 11 p.m. (which was normally considered late in the evening, because agriculture and business operated by daylight). Jewish people customarily stayed awake late on Passover night to speak of God’s redemption. The disciples should have been able to stay awake to keep watch; they had probably stayed up late on nearly every other Passover of their lives.

Jesus says to his disciples the key to keep away from any temptation is to pray, to speak to God. Jesus then went off to pray and shake off any temptation not to obey God. He says to God that if it is possible for him not to drink out of the cup of wrath,

but He also adds that He will obey the ultimate will of God. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus returns to the fundamental meaning of the cup as a representative of fate. In his prayer, the cup symbolizes the pain, degradation, and death that will be required of him. He prays that the cup might pass undrunk, but it is his fate to drain it to its last drop. Christ becomes all the nations of the world, taking on their fate, and drains the cup of wrath. By drinking of the cup God placed before him, Christ transforms the cup of wrath into the cup of life.

Jesus wrestled with the consequences of obeying God, of drinking the cup of wrath on behalf of all the sinners like Jacob once wrestled with God too. His sweat was so profuse – it was dripping the way blood would!

After Jesus' prayer He finds the disciples asleep. Again He emphasizes the importance of speaking to God in the deepest hour of need, suffering, despair and struggle!

Prayer

Jesus, you love us and you came to save us.
You were welcomed by the crowd on Palm Sunday,
then on Good Friday they shouted 'Crucify!'
Help us to learn how to follow you faithfully;
on the happy days and on the difficult days,
when we are laughing and when we are crying.
May we always know your love.

Amen