



[Pastor Keith GeRue](#)

Sermon for Lent 4 Midweek

March 18, 2026

Angels of the Passion: A Mission of Mercy, Part 2

Deuteronomy 21:22-23; Hebrews 1:1-14; Luke 22:39-46

I've seen some of the pictures your artists have created showing Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. Everything looks so calm and peaceful. *Jesus* looks so calm and peaceful, hands folded, gazing up into heaven. But I'm here to tell you - it wasn't like that at all! Those were hours of agony! But I'm getting ahead of myself . . .

Things were moving pretty fast now. Satan had entered Judas and he was out making the arrangements for the betrayal and arrest of Jesus. He knew where Jesus and the other disciples would be, for they had often met together there. It was the perfect place for the betrayal - away from the people so they wouldn't cause a commotion. So, Judas got the band of soldiers and officers that the chief priests and the Pharisees had arranged for him, and they gathered all their lanterns and torches and weapons, and headed out (John 13:2-3).

Jesus, meanwhile, was busy teaching His disciples. This was the last chance He had with them! His last few hours on earth. He had given them His Supper, and now was teaching them many things, about preparing a place for them in heaven, promising them the Holy Spirit, that He wasn't leaving them alone, as orphans, that He is the vine and they are the branches, that the world will hate them and persecute them - but they're going to be alright, because He has overcome the world (John 14-16). He spoke so lovingly! Caring for them. Wonderful words!

And boy, did the disciples need to hear all that! The next 24 hours - not even 24 hours! - would shake them to their very core. *And not just them . . .*

So, Jesus and His eleven *faithful* disciples get to the Mount of Olives and enter into the Garden of Gethsemane. Then He takes His three closest disciples - Peter, James, and John - with Him a little farther. And He told them, ***pray that you may not enter into temptation***. I'm not sure they knew why He said that, or exactly what to pray for.



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Oh, they were *sorrowful*. They knew *something* was up. They had images of Jesus entering into Jerusalem to shouts of *Hosanna*, and of the betrayal Jesus talked about, and of Jesus going to His Father, all swirling around their heads. But they couldn't imagine what was going to happen next. How could they? If they could, they probably wouldn't have fallen asleep!

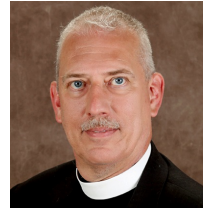
But Jesus knew. So, He started praying. That's a good example for you! When you're troubled or *in* trouble. But now's not the time to get into that . . .

Jesus started praying. Oh, He was in agony! Like so many times before, I wanted to swoop down, right then and there, and help Him! But I couldn't. You know why. I didn't have a command from our Father. So, I just watched. But it wasn't easy! As you heard tonight, *this is the one I worship!* The almighty God in human flesh. My brother and I are ministering spirits. We minister, we serve, we help - it's what we do! And I wanted to! Oh, how I wanted to! Just like when Jesus was in the wilderness, fasting and being tempted. But He had to go through that. And He had to go through this, too.

I was in awe. That God would do this. That the Father would send His Son, and the Son would come, become a man just like you, and then lay down His life for you. It almost leaves me without words . . . incredible.

And such agony! This was no calm prayer! He said, ***Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.*** Now, you must understand - it's not that He didn't want to die for you. It's not that He didn't want to save you. That's why He came! *But the cross . . .* that's no ordinary death. That's not even just a hard death. That's one of the worst deaths you could die! The nailing. The pain. The long hours of exposure. The humiliation. The suffocation. The cross was *designed* to strike fear in people, and remember, Jesus was the Son of God, yes - but He was also a man just like you. So yeah, faced with the cross and all that meant . . .

But actually, that wasn't even the worst part . . . It wasn't just the *physical* agony He was facing, but the *spiritual*. He wasn't just one man dying for his sin - He was one man dying for ALL the sins of ALL the world! All the guilt, all the shame, all the



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CURSE of the whole world upon Him! ***A hanged man is cursed by God.*** You heard those words tonight. And that's Jesus. **Hung on the cross under the curse of God.** So, I think you can kind of understand when He prayed, *Father, is there any other way? Any other way to save them?*

But there wasn't. Jesus had to drink this cup. I hope you got what Jesus was referring to there. Often in the Old Testament, when talking through His prophets to the wicked and unbelieving nations around Israel, our Father says they have to drink the cup of His wrath. He put up with them long enough. They wouldn't repent, so now they would drink this cup all the way to the dregs. **That's the cup Jesus was now about to drink!** The cup of God's wrath against ALL the sin of ALL the world. He would drink it down to the dregs, for He was going to endure it all. AND FOR YOU! He drank it all, so you wouldn't have to. So, you'd never have to worry about that.

But there IS a cup for you to drink, too. But not a cup of wrath, but a cup of blessing! The cup of blessing which Jesus gave to His disciples in the Upper Room, right before going out to Gethsemane. He drank your cup of wrath, and gave you His cup of blessing, the cup filled with His blood poured out for you for the forgiveness of your sins. That's a pretty good trade, don't you think?

But right now, agony. And not a little! Faced with this cup of wrath. What He was facing physically, and even more what He was facing spiritually . . .

And then . . . well, I couldn't believe it! **Our Father said GO!** And I didn't hesitate! I went right down to help Him, strengthen Him, minister to Him! Again, I know you'd love to know exactly what I did, but our Father didn't record that for you, so my lips are sealed! Well, if I had lips! I'm an angel, you know. We don't have bodies like you, though sometimes we appear in them.

But that wasn't the end of it. He prayed more. More agony. Even worse now! Not that I didn't do a good job! I most certainly did! But what Jesus was facing . . . well, I know you are all so impressed with the story of David and Goliath and how David defeated the giant. *But this is so much more than that!* That was just a little foreshadowing of the giant Jesus was now slaying! The giant of sin, death, and hell.



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So, as you heard, ***His sweat became like great drops of blood falling to the ground.*** That's how hard He was praying! You've never sweat like that. And that's how hard Jesus was *praying!* I think it probably safe to say you've never prayed like that - *that* hard! But that's okay. Don't feel bad. Remember, Jesus was enduring this all FOR YOU, so you wouldn't have to. That's how much He loves you!

And then it was over. Not that it was quick - Jesus was there for over an hour, praying like that. I'm not sure exactly how long - I lost track of time. But when He was finished praying, He was ready. Ready to be **the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.**

The disciples? Well, yeah, they were sleeping. So, He told them again, ***Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.*** Because they were about to be tempted in all sorts of ways! Tempted to doubt, tempted to despair, tempted to turn tail and run, tempted to deny . . . The same temptations all of you face, too. And they would face them right away, because even as Jesus was saying those words . . . Well, that's for next week!

But, prayer. Don't forget to pray. Jesus prayed all the time! Not just here. Before miracles He often praying. Before He chose the twelve, He was praying. He went up on mountains to pray. He would go to desolate places to pray. He went out before the sun came up to pray. When you're troubled or *in* trouble, when you're tempted, when you're discouraged, when you're confused, *pray.* And Jesus promised to always hear your prayers. And He knows everything you're going through. He went through it himself. And if He wouldn't turn away from the cross for you, He's certainly not going to turn away from the prayers of His children. You can count on that!

Well, now this gets really serious. Times up. Time for Jesus to die. I'll be back next week to talk about that. So, until then, I'll leave you again in His Name, the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.