



The Garden of Temptation and Testing (Part 2)

Key idea:

In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was tempted to turn away from drinking the cup of wrath of God, but in His deep anguish He drew close to His Father and victoriously embraced His will.

Key text:

Mark 14:27-52

“You will all fall away,” Jesus told them, “for it is written: ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’ 28 But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.” 29 Peter declared, “Even if all fall away, I will not.” 30 “I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “today — yes, tonight — before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times.” 31 But Peter insisted emphatically, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” And all the others said the same.

32 They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” 33 He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. 34 “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,” he said to them. “Stay here and keep watch.” 35 Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. 36 “Abba, Father,” he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”

37 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Simon,” he said to Peter, “are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? 38 Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.” 39 Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. 40 When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him.

41 Returning the third time, he said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42 Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

Just as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and

the elders. 44 Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard." 45 Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him. 46 The men seized Jesus and arrested him. 47 Then one of those standing near drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. 48 "Am I leading a rebellion," said Jesus, "that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? 49 Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled." 50 Then everyone deserted him and fled. 51 A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him, 52 he fled naked, leaving his garment behind.

Key points:

1. The disciples were overconfident in their ability to stand with Jesus, despite His warnings.
2. Spiritual alertness and prayer are essential for facing temptation and spiritual warfare.
3. We often try to use worldly methods to solve spiritual problems, which is ineffective.
4. Building a consistent prayer life is crucial for spiritual growth and preparedness.

Discussion Questions:

1. The teaching mentions the disciples' overconfidence. Can you recall a time when you felt spiritually overconfident? What was the result?
2. Jesus warned the disciples to "watch and pray." Why do you think they struggled to stay awake and pray? How does this relate to our own prayer lives?
3. Bret mentioned using "worldly weapons" for spiritual needs (e.g., anger to change behavior). Can you share an example of when you've been tempted to do this? What was the outcome?
4. How aware are you of the spiritual warfare happening around you daily? How might increasing this awareness change your approach to challenges?
5. The teaching suggests starting with realistic expectations for prayer. What would a realistic prayer plan look like for you personally?
6. Discuss the idea of "seasons" in spiritual growth, like Lent. How have you used (or could you use) specific seasons to focus on spiritual disciplines?

Practical Applications:

1. **Prayer Challenge:** Commit to a specific time each day for prayer over the next week. Start small and realistic.
2. **Spiritual Warfare Awareness:** Keep a journal this week noting situations where you sense spiritual conflict. Reflect on how prayer might have helped in those moments.
3. **Fasting Preparation:** Consider what you might "give up" during Lent to create more space for prayer and spiritual growth. Discuss your ideas with the group.
4. **Community Prayer:** Plan to attend the countywide prayer gathering on March 20th as a group.
5. **Accountability:** Partner with someone in the group to check in regularly about your prayer life and spiritual alertness.