

Theme: In the garden of Gethsemane, the disciples did not remain alert and pray, thus sealing their failure in the hour of temptation and testing.

I. Battle of Teutoburg Forest

- A. Roman commander Varus was so confident that he ignored clear signs of an imminent ambush.
- B. He did not take proper precautions, and almost all 20,000 Romans who marched into the forest died!
- C. The disciples were a lot like Varus - with disastrous results!

II. Jesus Warns the Disciples

- A. A strong warning of impending trouble
“You will all fall away,” Jesus told them, “for it is written: “I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.” Mark 14:27
 - 1. Jesus, their master predicts they are going to fall away during the coming trouble.
 - 2. Jesus, Whom they have seen so full of wisdom and miraculous knowledge, is telling them what will happen.
 - 3. Jesus, Whom they have confessed to be the Messiah, is telling them that great trouble is coming and they will fall away.
 - 4. Jesus quotes Scripture showing He will be struck, and they will all flee - this is God’s Word of truth!
 - 5. Jesus tells Peter he will fail three times before the night is over!
“I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “today — yes, tonight — before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times.” Mark 14:30

- a. Jesus says this is not far off - it will happen within a few hours!
 - b. He declares Peter will fail not once but three times!
6. The disciples have every reason to know that a severe test is coming and they are not prepared!
- B. Jesus tells Peter, James, and John to watch and pray
“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,” he said to them. “Stay here and **keep watch.**” ...³⁸ **Watch and pray** so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.” Mark 14:34, 38
 - 1. Jesus tells Peter, James, and John to keep watch
 - a. Some have taken this as a military style watch, looking out for any approaching danger.
 - b. But Jesus is talking about watching in prayer, not looking for enemies!
 - 1. He defines it in v38 - watch and pray!
 - 2. His final words in the Temple had stressed this type of watching as always needed for His followers
Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. ³⁴ It’s like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to **keep watch.** ³⁵ “Therefore **keep watch** because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back — whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. ³⁶ If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you **sleeping.** ³⁷ What I say to you, I say to everyone: **‘Watch!’**” Mark 13:33-37
 - c. Jesus did not mean a watch to prepare for physical battle, but rather spiritual alertness and prayer for spiritual warfare!
 - d. In the garden, He is reminding them of this strong call to spiritual alertness and prayer - because they are about to be put to the test!

2. Jesus tells them to watch and pray so they do not fall into temptation!

Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak. Mark 14:38

- a. This is further proof that 'watch' does not mean post a guard around Jesus, but be spiritually alert and pray!
 - b. They also are in the Garden of temptation and testing, and they need to be vigilant and pray so they do not fail!
3. The disciples have no reason to be caught unaware of the hour of temptation and testing, for Jesus has clearly warned them about it, and He has told them to prepare for it by prayer.

III. The Self-Confidence of the Disciples

- A. The disciples are confident they will not fall away

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. Mark 14:29-31

1. Peter is emphatic: I will not fall away! I will stand!
2. Others might fall, but I will never deny You!
3. Jesus says Peter will be given a warning crow of the cock, but he will still deny Jesus 3 times before morning!
4. Peter still is confident that he will stand, and so are all of the disciples! They say they will stand even unto death!

5. This is the picture of "confidence in the flesh"!

- B. Their self-confidence shows up in lack of prayer

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!" Mark 14:37-42

1. Jesus comes three times to make sure they are praying - just like Peter will deny Him three times!
2. Note the repetition of 'sleep' words in the passage!
3. One of the most critical moments in the history of the universe is unfolding around them, and they are asleep!
4. Despite their bravado and confidence, they can't even muster the strength to pray for an hour!
5. Even though Jesus keeps waking them and urging them to prayer and warning them of the danger about them, they keep falling asleep.
6. The end result of their misplaced self-confidence and trust in the strength of their flesh caused the disciples to sleep when they should have been alert in prayer.
7. As we will see, this sealed their fate before the battle even began!

IV. The Disastrous Outcome

A. Peter resorts to physical force for spiritual war

Then one of those standing near drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Mark 14:47

Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) John 18:10

1. Mark does not say who, but John tells us it was Peter who struck the High Priest's servant with the sword.
2. Because Peter slumbered when he should have been praying, he was utterly unprepared and resorts to physical violence.
3. Jesus rebukes Peter for this - for it is not the way of the Kingdom of God in the New Covenant
And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. ⁵¹ But Jesus answered, "No more of this!" And he touched the man's ear and healed him. Luke 22:50-51
4. Those who do not spiritually prepare by prayer, will find themselves tempted to use worldly weapons for spiritual needs and this always ends disastrously, for it is not the way of Jesus.

B. All of the disciples forsake Jesus and flee

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. Mark 14:50-52

1. EVERYONE deserted Jesus - not one remained
2. The unique story of the young man fleeing naked

- a. This is unique to Mark's Gospel
 - b. Jerome suggested it was Mark, and others have agreed.
 - c. We do not know, but the emphasis is the fact that everyone - the Twelve and everyone else - abandoned Jesus and fled.
 - d. In fact, the desire to abandon Jesus was so great that they even fled away naked. This is utter defeat!
3. The utter defeat of the disciples is a warning to all believers - those who do not watch and pray will utterly fail in the hour of temptation and testing.
 4. Those who do not spiritually prepare themselves will often attempt to use world weapons, and when these fail they will utterly collapse before the Enemy.

V. Applying the Word

A. Am I awake to the spiritual war raging around me?

Be self-controlled and **alert**. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. 1 Peter 5:8-9

1. I believe Peter writes this remembering the Garden.
2. Alert is the same Greek word as "watch" in Jesus' command to watch and pray in Mark 14:38.
3. Peter wants us to learn from his failure - we need to watch and pray for the spiritual battle that rages!
4. Do not be like Varus, lulled into sleep to the danger around us because of over-confidence in our abilities. This always leads to disaster.
5. We are part of a cosmic spiritual battle that rages around us every single day (throughout the world)!

6. We can not employ physical, worldly weapons in this spiritual war any more than the Romans could employ the legion tactics in the Teutoburg Forest, or Peter could use a sword in the Garden!
7. But we are tempted to do this every day
 - a. When faced with temptation, I try to use techniques to manage sin rather than letting the Spirit root it out of me.
 - b. As a father, I was tempted to use anger to make my kids change, but that eventually hardens their heart against me and the Gospel, for man's anger does not bring about God's righteousness!
 - c. Sometimes, we attempt to use shame or nagging to get a spouse or friend to do what we think they should - but that never brings about lasting change.
 - d. Christians are tempted to use politics to change the spiritual tide of our nation - but this eventually undermines the cause of the kingdom rather than helping it!
8. Much of what happens around us has an underlying spiritual cause, and it can only be addressed with the spiritual weapons of the Word and prayer.
9. Don't be a Christian materialist or Gnostic - there is a spiritual reality, and it is united to the physical world all around us!

B. Building an alert praying life

1. Begin with realistic expectations and plan
 - a. Immediate family, friends, BRCC, Missionary of the month - you can't pray for the whole world!
 - b. Pick a time that works for you - drive to work; early morning; lunch; or right before bed
 - c. Let your quiet time help guide your prayers

2. Use Lent as a time to grow in prayer and spiritual warfare
 - a. Lent starts in 10 days and lasts until Easter
 - b. A great time to focus and grow in prayer
 - c. Give something up to create space for prayer
 - d. Countywide prayer March 20, Good Friday April 18
 - e. Make these things a priority - watch and pray!
3. Be encouraged - Jesus hears your prayers! He is encouraging us to grow in this area!

C. The Communion Table

1. We come to confess our sins and failures (BCP)
2. We come to commune with Jesus and receive strength and help
3. Come and be strengthened!

The Garden of Temptation and Testing (Part 2)

Mark 14:27-52
 February 23, 2025
 Communion
 1 Peter 5:8-10

Teaching keywords: Prayer; temptation; testing and trial;; spiritual warfare; biblical characters

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. ¹⁰And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. 1 Peter 5:8-10

“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. Mark 14:27-52