

## Pray Like Jesus #4 - The Lord's Gethsemane Prayer

- Father God, this an incredible moment that we're going to enter into in the history of the world. God, it's this glimpse into one of Jesus' most difficult days but it gives us so much hope, so much clarity, so much instruction. God, for the people who give me the honor of teaching them, for those, Lord God, that are having a really difficult season, I pray that this would really minister to them. And God, for those of us who are in a good season but we have people in our lives that we know and love and they're in a tough season, God, could we take what we learned from Jesus today and minister to them in Jesus name we pray. Amen. All right, here's where we're at. We're in a run the Lord's Gethsemane prayer. To catch you up in Matthew 26, this is the very end of Jesus' life. These are his final hours. He is coming to the place where he's gonna die on the cross in our place for our sins and he has some ominous instruction. He says things like "I will be handed over and I will be betrayed." He knows exactly what is going to happen. Sometimes, for you and I, when we have a hard season in life, we don't see it coming. We're caught rather suddenly or unexpectedly. For Jesus, he knew that the purpose for his entrance into human history was ultimately to die on the cross in our place for our sins so he has been preparing himself for his entire life and he knows that every day, he's getting a little bit closer to that last day. In Matthew 26, just to catch you up to where we find ourselves in verse 36, we've already learned at this point about the plot to kill Jesus. So the religious and the political leaders, they conspired together to destroy him. They'd never worked together, they were adversarial but they had a known non-holy alliance to come against the Lord Jesus and then a sinful woman anointed Jesus at Bethany. She poured out some very expensive perfume to honor him and that was ultimately what would he would take to the cross with him. So if you think of Jesus dying on the cross in our place for our sins, as he's breathing his last breath and he's really breathing that anointing from this loving woman. She anointed him with oil and that was a gift so that as he was dying, he was remembering the love of the people that he was dying for. Well at this point as well, Judas had already agreed to betray Jesus. He had already decided that he was gonna crucify Christ. How many of you have had someone like that? They just betrayed you. You love them, you served them, you cared for them. And there wasn't really any reason or excuse, they just betrayed you. Judas has already made that decision. Jesus then celebrates the Passover. It's an ancient Jewish feast that went all the way back to the days of the Exodus where God's wrath was poured out on the first born son so that his people could be delivered. And ultimately, that was to lead us to Jesus and the wrath of God was gonna be poured out on the first born Son of God so that we as his people might be delivered. And in the middle of that in Matthew 26, Jesus stops and he says this bread, it's my body and this drink is my blood. He changes thousands of years of human history and he says everything has now come to a culmination. The whole purpose of the nation of Israel, all of the Old Testament, all of the prophecies, all of the holidays, all of the feasts, all of the sacrifices, he's basically saying is I'm going to the cross. It's all being fulfilled. And then Peter senses sort of the ominous nature of the moment. And what Peter says is "Jesus," basically, "I'm sorry. You're having such a hard time but you can count on me." And Jesus is like, "Actually, I can't. I can't. I can't." And that's where we pick up the story. And so what Jesus is going to do, he's going to pray. And the first

thing he's gonna do, he's gonna be praying for God's will. So Matthew 26. Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane. I've been there, it still exists. Tourists are able to go near that place. I've been down into that garden. It's an actual place. He said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, that's James and John, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. How many of you have had a hard day? Or maybe you've had a hard day, maybe somebody you know or loved is having a hard day. Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death." He's like, "I don't know how much longer I can do this. Carry this burden, this grief. Remain here and watch with me." And going a little farther, he fell on his face and he prayed saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not as I will but as you will." So let me give you the location, it's Gethsemane. And literally, there was the Mount of Olives. It's still there and at the base is Gethsemane and it's an olive garden. It's literally an olive garden and what they would do, they would collect the olives and they would put them in a press and then they would press the olive oil out. Well, what this garden literally becomes for Jesus is a spiritual press. The pressure of life is sort of encircling him and what is gonna press out of him is this prayer. And then ultimately, he talks about the cup. And for us, the question can be what does that refer to? In Isaiah 51:17 and this is all in the prayer, like Jesus' book but it talks about, quote, the cup of his wrath. And the language there is that when we sin against our holy and righteous Creator God, that all of our sin is poured into a cup. It's poured into a cup. So if you think of human history that every one of us has, in God's presence, a cup, with our name on it. And every time we sin against God, some justice, some wrath is poured into that cup until ultimately, that cup is filled with the wrath of God. And some people like to think that they're getting away with everything, they're getting away with nothing. It says this in Romans 2:5. Because of your hard and impenitent or unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. People don't talk about sin. We just talk about our stuff or our junk or our problems and we don't talk about God's wrath. God really hates sin. It's against his nature and his character. Furthermore, it's against the entire purpose for which he created the world in us. It's war against everything God loves and everyone God cares for. And what happens when we sin, there has to be justice for that. We live in a world right now where everyone is wanting justice but everyone's overlooking cosmic justice and God's justice. Everybody's thinking about well, here's what I deserve and what does God deserve? Just think of all the injustice God has endured. Just think of all that we have done wrong to God and he was ultimately altogether undeserving. Some of us, the pain in our life is at least in part by our own sin, our own failures, our own flaws, our own fault, not God. Every sin that's ever been committed against God is 100% our fault and 0% God's fault. And because God is holy and God is righteous and God is good, God needs to eradicate this sin problem so that things can return to reflect his character and nature. And the Bible talks about this in terms of wrath and what's really curious in our day, nobody really likes the language of wrath but let me tell you, we've got a lot of it. Pickets protests, death threats, storm the Capitol, loot, riot, burn, yell on social media. I'll just tell you what. If we get wrath, I feel like it's fair if God gets his too, okay? And sometimes, the people who cried the loudest for justice, they'll cry the loudest against God's wrath. And what they're basically doing hypocritically is they're saying everybody should get justice except for God. And I think God should get justice first. And this cup of wrath is the language all of our

sin goes in and then someone needs to empty and drink that cup. And some of you would say, God has no wrath for me, he's done nothing. I get away with it, I do whatever I want, nothing happens. You're just filling up the cup and the day is coming when one of two things will happen. You will drink and that's called hell or you will give that cup to Jesus and that's called grace, okay? That's the way the whole thing works. Now, some people will say, there's no way that Jesus, this loving merciful gracious God could pour out wrath on anyone. It says this in Revelation 14:10. It speaks of those who refuse Jesus, reject Jesus. See, Jesus is gonna go to the cross and he's gonna drink your cup, he's gonna drink my cup. He's gonna endure the wrath that we deserve so that he can give the grace that we do not deserve. He's gonna take our place out of love for us. But if we reject his love, if we reject his salvation, if we reject his forgiveness, it says of those people, Revelation 14:10, "He also will drink the wine of God's wrath poured full strength into the cup of his anger and he'll be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb." There's only two options, friend. Either Jesus drinks your cup or you drink it. That's it. Either you drink it or Jesus drinks it. Now, Jesus here is praying for us and himself and he's gonna go to the cross and he's gonna die in our place for our sins and he is going to drink the cup of wrath. So when he's praying Father, if there's any opportunity or any second possibility of me forgiving sin and saving sinners other than emptying this cup, let's go with plan B. That's what he's asking. There is no plan B, there's just plan A and that is somebody has got to drink your cup, somebody has got to drink my cup. And so Jesus loves us so much that he's willing to drink our cup, if we reject and refuse him, then it seems perfectly logical and just that we would have to empty that cup of wrath. So what Jesus is praying about here is imagine you suffering in hell paying the debt that you have to God through enduring the wrath of God. How many of you, that's terrifying? Now imagine doing that for everyone. That's what Jesus did. That's what Jesus did. And he's praying. A couple of things I wanna say on this portion of the prayer. Number one, the only thing worse than suffering is suffering without God's help. What's ultimately causing so much anxiety for Jesus, he's enjoyed perfect eternal union and communion with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. Whatever they went through, they went through together. This one, he's going to go it alone. When he says on the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" The theologians say that when Jesus took upon himself our sin, at that point, the Father turned his back on the Son. I've been through some hard things in my life as we all have. And you know what? I can count on my wife Grace. I love her, she's always been there. I can't imagine if I was to go through the hardest season of my life without my best friend. That's what Jesus is facing and that's why Jesus is praying. The only thing worse than going through it is going through it alone and he's gonna go through it alone. Number two, Jesus here is inviting people into personal relationship. You need to be very careful when you're hurting who you invite in. Sometimes, when we're hurting, we grab anybody. Have you done that? You had a hard day and called your family and then realized should have just hung up the phone. Should not have invited them into this situation whatsoever. Jesus has tens of thousands of people who love him and follow him, he doesn't invite them all to be close to him. These are his personal relationships. He's got his 12 disciples, it's down to 11 now because Judas is betraying him but he picks three, Peter, James and John. These are his nearest and dearest disciples. The point is this. We've got professional relationships, we've got pastoral relationships. You've only got a

few really close personal relationships. What Jesus does, he invites just a few friends in to the most difficult, the darkest day of his life. When you're hurting, not everybody needs to be involved. In fact, the number of people involved should be very small and it should be the people that you feel closest to and safest with and Jesus here picks three. In addition, number three, there are not good and bad emotions but there are emotions in the flesh and emotions in the spirit. How many of you have heard, well, Christians should be cheerful. Here, Jesus is not. Well, Christian should always look on the bright side. Here, he's not really talking about that. Well, Christian should always maintain an upbeat positive attitude. Well, I don't feel like we should be better Christians than Christ, right? Like Jesus was a good Christian but I'm better. I don't get all sad and bummed out and anxious like him. Okay? How many of you have been told, you're sad, you're scared, you're anxious, you're worried, you're nervous, you lack faith? Or you're like Jesus. Because he has anxiety. He has concern. He has fear. He says he's sorrowful to the point of death, that he's troubled. He's having a bad hard day. I wanna give some of you permission to be honest about where you're at and stop faking it. Faking it is not a ministry, faking it as a misery. Some of you have been pretending and pretending is not Christianity. Jesus here is being very honest and very real. Number four, faith does not mean you're not burdened. Faith is what allows you to pray the burden off. Is Jesus burdened? He's very burdened. He's up all night. You know that you're having a hard time when you can't sleep. And some people are looking, they'd be like, well, if you really trusted God, you'd go to bed and trust him in faith. No, no, Jesus is up all night in faith, trusting that through prayer, he will take the burden off of himself and hand it to the Father and the Spirit to carry it for him. It's okay sometimes to not be okay. That's my next point. Sometimes, it's okay to not be okay. As you read this about Jesus, does he seem okay? If you walked up to him at three o'clock in the morning all by himself, praying the same thing over and over face down in the dirt, weeping and crying, you wouldn't think he's doing fine. You would think he's in crisis. And you know what? Sometimes, you're gonna be there and sometimes, the people you love are gonna be there. And it doesn't mean that they're not Christ-like. The truth is in those moments, those might be some of the moments that they're most Christ-like. How about this one? Isolation running from your trouble, solitude is running to your Father. There's a big difference, my friend, between solitude and isolation. Solitude is where you get alone with God. Isolation is where you're just running from your trouble. People that practice isolation, they get in a lot of trouble. They get emotionally unhealthy, unwell, okay? One of my Big Heart Ministries is for men. I could tell you, a lot of men, when they're in a hard season, you know what they do? They isolate, they disappear. They don't go to church, they don't come out of their garage, they don't come home from work, they isolate. They just kind of disappear. And they're not well. This is not isolation, this is solitude. Isolation is I wanna get away from my problem and solitude is I have a big problem, I wanna get to my Father. I need his help with this. Solitude is very healing. Isolation is very dangerous, very dangerous. How many have you have struggled to know what biblical submission means? You've heard that word, right? Every once in a while, somebody has enough courage to quote it at a wedding and it's like a hose and a cat. It's not well-received, usually. Okay. How many of you have heard, you need to submit to God, how many of you heard that? What does that mean? What does that look like? 'Cause sometimes, people are like you need to stop being emotional, you need to stop talking about it, you just need to shut up and

obey God and submit to his will. Is that how Jesus here demonstrates submission? No. Does Jesus here demonstrate independent thoughts? Yeah. What he's saying is Father, you want me to drink the cup. Father, I'm struggling to drink the cup. Here's what you're thinking, here's what I'm thinking. Is he still being submissive? Yeah, he is. Have you ever met a wife that had independent thoughts? Let me say it another way. Have you ever met a wife? All right? She can be respectful of her husband, still have her own thoughts and even maybe disagree with some of his thoughts. All the lady said-

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Very quick and enthusiastic. Yeah, okay. How about this one on submission? Is Jesus being honest about his desires? Yeah. Is he being submissive? Yeah, but what he's saying is, "Okay. Enduring wrath to atone for the sin of the world. If that's what I need to do, that's what I'm gonna do but I'm really struggling. I'm really struggling to accept that." How about this one? Is he honest about his feelings? Is it being a little emotional? See, this is one of the great myths. If you really trust God, you won't have any negative emotions and if you're really submissive, you won't get emotional. Is Jesus emotional? He's emotional, friends. He's up all night. He says he's sorrowful and troubled. He's emotional. It's just abusive to look at somebody who's really in a difficult season and saying, why are you so emotional? And I think the better question is how come you're not? What's wrong with you? If it's painful, why are you denying reality rather than accepting it and walking through it? Jesus is submissive but he's very emotional. He's having a difficult time. Is he sinning? No. So you can be godly, not sinning, have independent thoughts, honesty about your desires and be real about your emotions and your feelings and still be godly and submissive. You need to know this, parents. It's not just shut up and obey. It's how are you feeling? What do you think? What are you scared of? What do I need to know? How can I help you? As the Father parents him, we've got to parent our kids. And ultimately, is Jesus dialoguing his struggle and his disagreement? Yeah, it's called prayer. You're not in sin if you're like God, I need to talk to you about this. I'm really struggling, I'm feeling it, this is very hard, it's painful. I love you, I trust you, I wanna do what you want me to do. I'm just not there yet and I'm really having a hard time. In fact, that's how you build an honest relationship with God or anyone else. It takes a lot of dialogue, you got to talk it through. You got to work it out. Because here's the good news. God cares about the relationship, not just the results. And he wants to walk with you to get you where you need to be and as leaders, this is a leadership principle. And as a parent, this is a parenting principle. The last few, prayer is not about God doing what we want. Prayer is about us doing what God wants. Now, Jesus and the Father, they're working it through but in the end, Jesus knows that the Father's gonna make the decision. That's authority and submission to authority, something our world knows nothing about. But he's going to accept it. But he's gonna struggle to get there. Because God either delivers us from the valley or through the valley. The Bible talks about this. Sometimes, we go through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. How many of you'd love to book a flight over it? They're like, oh, however much that costs, I'll fly and I'll just be like, praying for you. I'm just flying all right. Sorry, down there, seems dark. How many of you, you've tried to walk around it, you've tried to go over it and you just, you got to go through it. God's gonna deliver you around it and sometimes, God's gonna deliver you through it. For

Jesus, does he gonna get around it? Got to go through it. And this is the last day of Jesus' life. Let me say this. The most important day of your life is your last day. Your birthday, the day of your birth, that's a great day. Your wedding day, great day. There's a lot of big milestones in life. The day you become a parent, great day. The day of your death, most important day. Jesus has literally spent his entire life preparing for his last day. Let me tell you this. You need to spend your entire life preparing for your last day. Like Jesus died, we're all gonna die. And I'm asking you, do you know Jesus? The reason that Jesus is going to die is to prepare you and I for our last day. He's gonna forgive our sin, he's gonna drink the cup of wrath with our name on it, he is going to die and then he is going to rise and defeat death. Jesus is the only one who goes to the other side of death, comes back to tell us what awaits us there and goes before us to prepare a place for us. Here's what I'm telling you, you are not ready to die unless you know the Lord Jesus. The only way to be ready for your last day is to know the Lord Jesus Christ. And I love you. I want you to have great days between now and your last day but if you know Jesus, honestly, this life is as close to hell as you will ever be. Okay? And if you don't know Jesus, this life is as close to heaven as you will ever be. The most important day of your life is your last day. So if you've not given your sin to Jesus, if you've not trusted in Jesus, if you've not committed yourself to Jesus, this is a very important day and this is the day that you give yourself to Jesus and you prepare yourself for your last day, okay? So Jesus prayed for the Father as well. Here's what we would assume. Well, glad that's over. Nope, he's gonna do it again. How many of you, you've prayed God spoke and you're like we've gotta talk about it again. How many of you are married? You ever had the same conversation twice? Welcome to a relationship. All right, praying again for God's will. Sometimes, you talk about it and then you got to talk about it again. Matthew 26:40-43, "And he came to his disciples and found them sleeping." We judge them but how many of you at 3:00 a.m., you'd be like I'll pick up my prayer in the morning. "And he said to Peter, 'So you could not watch with me for one hour?'" Now, we judge them. How many of you have not prayed for one hour in the middle of the night? True? We could either judge Peter or just say, yeah, I'm Peter's disciple, not Jesus, I go to bed. "'Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.' Again, for the second time, he went away and he prayed." He prayed again "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drank it," enduring the wrath, "your will be done. Again, he came and found them sleeping, their eyes were heavy." Let me just unpack his second prayer. How many of you have talked to the Lord about the same thing more than once? Okay. How many of you, you see the future and you're like I don't know if I can make it so Lord, I'm gonna talk to you and he's like you're gonna make it, here's the plan. You're like, okay, we got to talk about this again. How many of you felt a little ungodly or unspiritual? Jesus prays the same thing twice. He's gonna pray to third and he would probably keep praying it but they come to kill him so he only gets to pray three times. A couple of things. Suffering can be very lonely even if people really love you. Do a lot of people love Jesus at this point in his ministry? Yeah, he's got crowds. Peter, James and John, his lead disciples who are there with him at very significant points in human history. Did they love him? Yeah, they do. But he's still lonely. Just because you're lonely doesn't mean you're not loved. Sometimes, people do love you and they're just not there for you and it's not because they don't love you. It's just because they're human. Sometimes, we feel things that we assume that those who love us would feel but they just don't feel them like we do. This is why hurting people,

sometimes, they're very lonely people. How many have you've had friends who've totally failed you, bailed on you, not come through for you, drop the ball for you? Okay, how many of you, you've had that? Congratulations, you have normal Christian relationships. Peter's best three guys failed him. They were bad friends. He's like I'm having a hard night, I got to pray, could you guys stay up with me? They're like, "Totally, we'll be right over there snoring." How about this? Have we all been Judas and betrayed Jesus? Yeah. See, we read the story and we immediately align ourselves with Jesus, right? You're like, "Oh, I know exactly what it feels like to be Jesus and just have a betrayer and a failure. I call those mom and dad." Okay? If you always read the Bible and you're like, "Yeah, I know how Jesus feels." You need to read it again. You don't get to sit there every time and be Jesus. Oh yeah, yeah. I know what it's like to be perfect and misunderstood. So. Okay? Have we all been Judas and betrayed? Have we all been Peter and failed? We have, we have. That's why Jesus is gonna die, right? 'Cause we need it. We need we need the forgiveness that Jesus brings. Here's another observation from the prayer. The more leadership responsibility you have, the more accountability you bear. The three guys sleep. Who does he come looking for? Peter. Why Peter? He's the leader. It's like in the garden where Adam and Eve sinned. Eve sins first. Who does God come looking for? Adam 'cause he's the leader. You start with the leader. That's why in this church, if there's problem, I'm gonna start with the dad. I'm gonna start with the husband. You start with a leader. Peter is the leader and the leader doesn't mean you're the boss or the bully but that you take first responsibility for those that are following your leadership. So some of you wanna be a leadership but you don't wanna have more responsibility and accountability. That's exactly what leadership is. How about this one? Spiritual warfare pushes you to the limits of your humanity. Jesus says this. He says the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. What he's saying is your inner person, your soul wants to pray and endure but physically, you're just tired and if you've been there, you're like I love God, I just can't go anymore. Satan and demons do not share, the same is true of angels, all these divine created beings, some fallen, some unfallen, one thing they share in common is they don't share in the limits of our humanity. So the Bible says that angels will worship God day and night. Well, these guys can't pray day and night. They just proved it. It says that Satan is the accuser of the children of God in Revelation 12, that he accuses them day and night. See right now, demons don't have to wear masks. Okay? Demons are not worried about vaccines. Demons don't call in sick. Demons don't need to take a nap. Demons don't need to ensure that they're hydrated. Demons will wear you out. Demons will wear you out. They will get you to the limits of your humanity. The backdrop for all of this is spiritual warfare because Satan has entered Judas Iscariot to attack and destroy Jesus. This is absolutely spiritual warfare. And how many of you, there are times just like I just feel like I'm under attack and I am just exhausted and I can't endure anymore. I've found the limits of my humanity. That's where Jesus is approaching in his full humanity and that's where the disciples have arrived in their full humanity. The spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. Let me say this too about love. Love does what is best for you, not for me. What Jesus is about to endure dying on the cross in our place for our sins, does it benefit him? No. The Father and the Spirit turning their back on the Son. Jesus and during the wrath of God. 2 Corinthians 5:21, "God made him who had no sin to become sin so that in him, we might become the righteousness of God." He took our place and put us in his place. That means it costs him everything and it benefited him nothing. Love is sometimes what we say but love is

most of the time, what we do. Jesus says it this way. Greater love has no one than this. You lay down your life for your friends. See, what Jesus is doing here, he's gonna love us and he's gonna make us friends by dying for us. And sometimes, the biggest struggle in life is if I do this, it is going to come at a tremendous personal cost and it doesn't benefit or gain me in any way. How many of us, if we do something, we at least want something in return? You owe me or this will benefit me. And I'll be totally honest. I'm married. There are times that I do loving things for my wife but because she's my wife and she's gonna be nice to me, I can't say that all of my motives are all together pure, amen? If I do the dishes, she'll be nice to me. It looks like I'm praying about doing dishes, okay? How many of us, we do things because there's at least something in it that's beneficial for us? Jesus, there's nothing beneficial for him. It's just pure love. We win, he loses. That's what he's struggling with. Let me say this. It's not ungodly to start in your prayer struggling with God's will as long as you end accepting it. God loves you so much that he will start with you in the conversation of prayer wherever you happen to be. You're like I'm in a bad spot and I'm struggling, God is a father who's gonna parent you in prayer. He's like you know what? If that's where you're at, we're gonna start there. Wherever you're at, we're gonna start there and through me talking to you, you talking to me, that's the conversation of prayer, we're gonna get you to the place that you need to be. How many of you are parents? You know exactly what this is like with your own kid. They don't necessarily start where they need to be so you need to have a relationship and a conversation and you need to be emotionally present for as long as it takes to get them to the place where they are, where they need to be. Jesus here is not in sin. He's human. Let me say this. It's not a sin to be human. Now, humans are sinners, Jesus is human but he's not a sinner. But here, his emotion, his struggle his process, it's very human. It's not a sin to be human. He says this in the context of this prayer, not as I will but as you will and your will be done. Through the process, he comes into submission and agreement. Let me say that there are times in your life that you're just not going to start accepting God's will and ready to proceed forward with the consequences but prayer is gonna get you there. Okay, one of the first hospital visits I ever did, I was a young pastor. I'm 50. I've been a senior pastor 25 years, half my life. I was I was probably 25 years of age. They called me the senior pastor, I wasn't senior pastor. I wasn't senior anything. We didn't even have a kid yet. I got a call, we had a college ministry. Everybody's young. All I ever did was weddings. I did so many weddings. So many. I did like a hundred weddings in a couple of years. I should have done a group. Everybody just show up. I can't eat any more cake. So did all these weddings and then every once in a while, I would get a call to go to the hospital because a young couple had a baby. Let me tell you, at weddings, they can be pretty fun depending upon the extended family. If you've been married, you know exactly what I'm prophesying. Baby born, that hospital visit, awesome. Like it's a baby! That's awesome. I got this call, guy called, young married couple. He said, "Pastor Mark, we need you to come to the hospital right now." Okay, I get there. They were just married a short time. Very godly, very great, very wonderful young couple and they were looking forward to, I think they just bought the first house, they're getting ready to start a family, they're talking about kids. I mean, they're great people. And I said, "What's up man?" He's like, "My wife is in a coma on a ventilator." She's in her 20s. I was like, "What? What happened?" He's like, "I have no idea." He said, "I came home from work and I opened the door and she's laying on the floor in a coma." He's like, "I don't know what



happened." He's just in shock. He can't cry, he can't breathe, he's just in shock. I said, "Well, buddy, where are we at?" He said, "She's brain dead and the ventilator's keeping her alive." He said, "And I am her husband so they want me to unplug it but if I unplug it, it means there is no chance of her surviving, she's gone." Is it okay for that guy to not start at God's will? Is it okay for him to say Father, we need to talk about this. And I have some desires and also have some feelings about this. I'll never forget, he literally, it's like when I got there, he was carrying this whole burden and when I showed up, it was like I was there to help carry the burden. He literally fell to the ground. So he is on the floor in the hospital and he scoots up against the wall and he's just sitting there. And he puts his face in his hands and he's like, what do we do? I said, "We praying." He said, "What do we pray?" I said, "Whatever you want." So he just starts crying. He's like, "Father, I want you to heal my wife. I wanna take her home. I wanna have a family, I wanna raise kids with her, I wanna grow old with her." He's like, "Father, all this stuff that we talked about at the wedding, that's what I want." He was very emotional. He was very honest, he was very respectful, he was very conversational. Then he prayed and then I laid a hand and prayed over him. We sat there for a while. Didn't say much. He's like, "I'm gonna pray it again." I said, "Okay, buddy." Put a hand on him, he prayed the exact same thing again. We sat there all night. We sat there all night. And he kept praying the same thing over and over and over and over. Morning came and he said, "I need to pray again." And I said, "Absolutely." He said, "Father, your will be done." And then he unplugged his wife. She didn't get healed. Then we had the funeral. And he was a great man. And he said, "Pastor Mark," he's like, "I wanna speak at the funeral." I said, "Okay." And he got up and he talked about it was God's will for me to marry her and I know that 'cause I prayed about it. And it was God's will for me to love her and I know that cause I prayed about it and it was God's will for me to spend some time as her husband and I know that because I prayed about it. And he said, "It was God's will for me to send her home first because I prayed about it." And he said, "I just thank God that I got to be married to her." I saw it. The guy is a gladiator, that's what he is. And he prayed. He literally prayed at the funeral. He said, "Not my will, your will be done." He quoted Jesus. There are times you just got to keep talking about it and the Father loves you so much, he's gonna help you get there. And just because you get there doesn't mean it's easier. It just means you're not alone. Let me say something to you religious people. There's a big difference between quoting a verse and ministering to a person. When pain comes, when trauma comes, when trial comes, when trouble comes, when Gethsemane arrives, religious people who are emotionally shallow or unhealed or immature or unavailable, they like to quote a verse and then they get to pretend like it's resolved and over. Okay? It would have been abusive for me to sit at the hospital with this man and quote Romans 8:28 and go home. Romans 8:28 is the most abused verse in the whole Bible. We're gonna be back in Romans in a few weeks and we'll get there. We're gonna be in Romans 8. God works at all things for the good of those who love him and are called according to his purpose. You know what that's talking about? The eternal finish line. You know what? We're not there. It doesn't even say that God's gonna work on all things for the good of those who love him and are called according to his purpose in this life. It doesn't even give me a finish line. It may mean that after I die 10 million years later in the kingdom, everything gets resolved. And to just tell me that today doesn't mean it's okay today. It means that in faith, it will be okay but today, it's not okay. And sometimes, what religious people do, they just quote a verse thinking that quoting

a verse is all that needs to be done. Let me tell you this. I'm a Bible guy. Okay? When Jesus is in this moment, he doesn't need people to teach him anything. He doesn't need to learn a new verse that he didn't know. And he doesn't need his someone's theological perspective to clarify it all for him. He knows what's happening, he knows what the Bible says and he is the entire point of the entire Bible. So just quoting a verse or giving a theological answer is not going to help him. What he asked his friends to do was to be present with him in it. And sometimes, it's the ministry of presence. That's like look, I don't need another verse. I know the verses. And I don't need a theological explanation, I understand. I'm just telling you I got shot in the soul and I just need some comfort. Okay? I mean I love you guys but and some of you come from these sort of cessationist, fundamental worlds where it's like well, I quoted a verse and then I walked on. It's like, well, that was abusive. You just weaponized God's word. You took all the sympathy, empathy and compassion out of it. You turned it into a jeopardy episode. You quoted the answer and then you went home. Let me tell you this, Jesus didn't just drop theological truisms or statements from heaven, he came down and felt it and got in it with us. And sometimes, ministry is just getting in it with people and being in it with people. And I'm not against quoting the Bible, I'm not against quoting verses or helping clarify theological issues. But it's like a guy's wife commits adultery and runs off with his kids and he's like, "Oh, you're more than a conqueror in Christ." Yeah but some other guy's tucking my daughter in and emotionally, I appreciate the verse but a little compassion would be appreciated. He prayed in God's will, the Lord Jesus did, then he prayed in God's will and guess what happens. Eventually, you got to walk in God's will. You can't just say thy will be done, then you got to walk in that will. That's what he's gonna do next. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed third time, saying the same words again. Same thing. God, please, heal my cancer. God, please, bring home my wayward child. God, please, restore my broken marriage. Right? There are some things that you talk to God about more than once. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Sleep and take your rest later on. See the hours at hand and the Son of Man is betrayed." It's the worst of all, "into the hands of sinners. Rise, Let us be going, my betrayer is at hand." The point is that Jesus prayed three times because he ran out of time. He would have kept praying. And what he's doing here, he is drinking the cup of God's wrath and he's taking the place of sinners. He's taking Adam's place. I wrote this down for you. Adam turned from the Father in a garden, Jesus turned to the Father in a garden. Adam was naked and unashamed, Jesus was stripped and bore our shame. Adam's sin brought us thorns, Jesus wore a crown of thorns. Adam substituted himself for God, Jesus was God substituting himself for sinners. Adam sinned to the tree, Jesus bore our sin on a tree. Adam died as a sinner, Jesus died for sinners. Adam fell to sin in the garden but Jesus fell to his knees to pray in a garden to ensure that they did not fall prey to sin. My friend, if Jesus needed to pray, we all need to pray. And prayer is the most important part of any process. This is Jesus' healing, unburdening, processing. Sometimes, we just wanna shove people to the conclusion that sometimes, God wants to walk people through the process. And prayer is the most important part of the process. This is what I'm telling you. I don't have any problem with counseling. I don't have any problem with professionals but if prayer is not included, then there is brokenness in the process. Because prayer is working at the level of the soul and only the Holy Spirit has the ability to heal at the level of the soul. A doctor can help the body, a psychologist can help the mind but the Holy Spirit is the only one who has access to the soul

and that's prayer. God does not need you to pray the same thing over and over. But sometimes, you need to pray the same thing over and over. And here's what I love about God, he's willing to hear it every time. He's not like a parent who's like, I've already heard this. Father's like, I love you. Just keep saying it until you feel like you've transferred the burden. Sometimes, people hurt us. Sometimes, Satan hurts us through people. Who's working through Judas here? Satan is, Satan is. Sometimes, it's okay to not be okay. Let me ask you this. In this moment, is Jesus okay? Not okay. Sometimes, it's okay to not be okay. So some of you who are fakers and pretenders. I'm doing great, I'm doing fine. I'll get over it, that was in the past. I just keep myself busy, I try not to think about it. Jesus isn't okay. It's okay to not be okay. The deeper the anguish, the longer the prayer. This is the deepest anguish of Jesus' life so it's gonna be the longest night of prayer in Jesus' life. He's gonna be up all night. There are some things you can't rush the process. You just got to take time and you got to walk through that Valley of the Shadow of Death. when Jesus prays, does he always pray Spirit-filled prayers? Yeah. Let me ask you this. What's the Father's answer to his perfect, sinless, Spirit-filled prayer? No. So, some of you were theologians, your mind just exploded. Don't let Jesus be shoved into your theology. Let Jesus be your theology. Okay, he's filled with the Spirit, he's perfect and he's praying and he asks for something and the answer is no. You could be filled with the Spirit. You can love the Lord, you can make a request, it can even be a godly request and the answer might be no. And let me say this, friends, because some of you are really struggling right now. I can see it on your face and I love you. Some of your thought is I just need to be tough. Let me give you a little insight. You don't need to be tougher than Jesus. Let me go a step further. You can't be tougher than Jesus. This same story of Jesus Gethsemane prayer is recorded by a man named Luke. He's a medical doctor. He oftentimes includes a lot more clinical information because he's a doctor. He says this in Luke 22:43 and 44 about Jesus. There appeared to him an angel from heaven. You know what? Jesus needed some supernatural help. Strengthening him and being in agony, he prayed more earnestly and his sweat became like great drops blood falling down to the ground. That's what Dr. Luke records. It's a medical condition called hematidrosis. It's actually a clinical medical condition that only under the most extreme circumstances of stress and duress, the human body literally starts to seep blood from pores because you have reached the full limits of your anxiety in your humanity. So here's what I'm saying. You don't need to be tougher than Jesus. Jesus was fully God, to be sure but he was also fully human and we see that here and he gives you a right as a human being. To be fully human. And as human beings, we have to give one another the right to be fully human. Let me give you three thoughts and I have more but we won't get into it and I'll have a conversation with Ashley. Here's my question friend. Okay? My name is Mark, I'm your pastor for a moment. What is your Gethsemane moment? Some of you, you know exactly what these moments feel like because you've had this in your past. Some of you buried your spouse, some of you buried your kids, some of you have miscarried your child, all right? Some of you right now, you're losing your cancer battle. Some of you, you've had it in your past, some of you, you've got it right now in your present. This is your immediate moment. How many of you, this is not something that you're experiencing right now but someone you know or love is? Like they're having their Gethsemane moments. So you're in the position of Peter, James and John. They've invited you to be there. Let me say this. If you are often in this emotional place that Jesus is during the Gethsemane prayer, you're unwell.

Some of you will read Jesus' prayer and they'd be like, "I know exactly how he feels. I feel like that all the time." If you feel like that all the time, there's something wrong with you and you need help. Jesus isn't like this all the time. There are degrees of importance with certain circumstances in life. And if everything for you is at code red level and you have this kind of emotional mental response, you are unwell. There's brokenness in you. Some of you live here. I'm telling you, Jesus didn't live here. Now, he visited here when circumstances required it but he did not live here. Number two, if you're never in this emotional place, you are unwell. Some of you are that's why I don't lose it, that's why I can't cry. That's why I need to stay busy, that's why I need to ignore it. That's why I can't just fall apart. I can't get all emotional like Jesus. I can't be like Jesus. You know what? You need to be like Jesus. Some of you have never allowed yourself to be in that kind of emotional place. But some of you, honestly, Jesus is waiting for you in that emotional place. 'Cause we have a high priest who is able to sympathize with us in our weakness. He lives to intercede for us. What I love about Jesus is not only does he die, rise, he ascends. He actually told us about this prayer. Do you know why I know that? Because no one was there to hear it. They're all asleep. After Jesus died and rose, he felt this was so important that he needed to tell us what his prayer was. Now as he ascends into heaven, when we pray, we pray through Jesus to the Father and ultimately, he brings our prayer to the Father and he sends angels and also other resources in the spirit to minister to us. Here's what I'm telling you, when we pray, we're talking to Jesus who's been here. We're talking to Jesus who's felt it. We're talking to Jesus that had betrayal, demonic attack, poverty, anxiety. We're also talking to a Jesus who has felt physical suffering and pain. See, every other week religion has a concept of God that he lives far away and he's not gonna get in it. Only Christianity says our God came down and got in it with us and he went up and when we talk in prayer, we talked to the God who's been in it and he intercedes for us and he asked compassion and empathy available to us. Last one on this list. If you've skipped this emotional place, you are unwell and you will remain unwell until you revisit it. I love you. Some of you like, that's in the past. Not if your emotional in the president, it's not resolved. I've already dealt with that. Probably not. Some of you, there's a brokenness in your past that is not fully healed because you've not had your Gethsemane moment. You've not just taken the time and energy to pray and meet with the Father and work the process through and come into right relationship and actually be honest about how you're feeling and what you're thinking and what is happening. And sometimes, the brokenness in a person's life is because they didn't have a Gethsemane moment in their past and as a result, the brokenness continues with them. Okay? Let me invite up my daughter Ashley. We're gonna have a little bit of a conversation and then we'll pray for you because we love you. I wanna thank you, honey, for writing the book with me. Good to see you. You look very cute. I think they got chairs for us. Maybe start by talking a little bit. Thanks, buddy. You look really cute, by the way.

- Thank you.

- If I wasn't your dad, I would adopt you. Talk a little bit about your physical health and pain.

- Yeah, so since I was little, I've had a lot of stomach issues, a lot of allergies and just stomach

aches and issues and it seems to have gotten worse as I've gotten older and eventually, now, I don't know. I've had surgery, I've been to like 20 different doctors. Nobody really knows what's going on but I wake up with a stomach ache every morning. sharp pain, I can't eat a lot of things. Some days, some weeks, I can't eat anything at all. I'm in so much pain that I just physically can't eat. And yeah, it's hard.

- It's hard.

- No, it's okay.

- No, it's not. That's what we're talking about.

- Oh, yeah, it's true. It's true.

- I love you. I love you.

- It's true. And so it seems to have just gotten worse as I've gotten older and I've been hospitalized a bunch of times and nobody seems to be able to figure out what's going on. And it's always-

- And you were a very healthy person.

- just been an underlying thing. I mean, yeah. I eat vegetables and sleep and drink water and like. You know, like all the things that they tell you to do, so.

- When you were very little, you probably don't even remember. You were really little. You're like, "Daddy, can I have a treat?"

- Mm-hm, yeah.

- And I said, yeah. And you went to the fridge and you opened it up and you got out broccoli.

- Broccoli. I loved broccoli.

- And she said, "Treat!" My sons never did that. If I said you could have a treat, it was a bucket of ice cream.

- Yeah.

- So you've always eaten very healthy. No drugs, no alcohol.

- No drugs.

- No you're-

- Would nowhere to get them.

- Yeah, yeah. You eat vegetables, drink water and read the Bible.

- Pretty much.

- And have constant chronic physical pain.

- Yup.

- How many countries have you been in the hospital in?

- I think just two or three but yeah, I probably should have gone a couple of other times but it's pretty sketchy when you're in South America. So the one time I was in Ecuador, it was just kind of blood all over the walls and iguanas and this lady getting surgery right next to me and I was like yeah, it's like not my best life experience, trying to explain to them in Spanish what's wrong with me. Yeah, alone so that was not great but I made it. We're here, so.

- So in that, you helped run the prayer tent at Arizona State University. Maybe tell them a little bit about that ministry.

- Yeah, so through college, while I was going through all that and helping you with your ministry translating stuff into Spanish, I was also the student leader of a ministry at ASU, Arizona State, where we prayed 24/7. We had a tent in the middle of campus and 24/7, we would have people there praying, worshiping, singing, praying for people that came by evangelizing from all different churches. It was really, really cool and just a really unified front of believers that covered different time slots throughout the day and made sure that there was always someone there praying. And it's been going on for over probably 15 years now. Sometimes, we take a break in the summer if it's like 120 degrees so people don't die but generally, it's there all the time.

- Did you you or the team pray for people and see them healed?

- Mm-hm, yeah, yeah, lots of times. There were lots of times that people would come in with various ailments or injuries or different things and I would pray for them and other people would pray for them and I watched a couple of people get healed miraculously, that even a lot of them were very skeptical of whether that was possible or not and God used that moment to heal them. One kid had a broken arm and felt fine after getting prayed for. Took his cast off and was like, "Oh, my arm's fine." So really, really cool stuff and just lots of miracles and really good times there, yeah.

- But you never got healed.

- Mm-mm, nope. Still have a stomach ache every day.

- You still pray for healing?

- Yeah.

- What are some of the least helpful things that people said?

- Yeah, there's a there's a list of those. Yeah, so one night, I just went to sleep, normal night and I woke up in the middle of the night and I had such a bad stomach ache that I was about to throw up so I go to the bathroom and in the process, I fainted because I was in so much pain and I fell and I hit my head and I was passed out. I was alone, I didn't know how long. I still don't know how long, could have been a couple of minutes, I have no idea but I got up and I called Landon and I called my mom and they prayed for me and I was reading my Bible and I was praying and just hoping that it would go away. And it did and I went back to sleep and I was okay but that's happened a few times. I don't know why. And then I was telling some of my friends about it. Friends, I used that term loosely. You'll see why in a second. I was telling them about that and they were like well, it's a good thing that God woke you up. He must have had something important to say to you about your sin and how you were being punished for something you did wrong. And I was like I don't think so.

- I'd like to know where they live, I'd like to-

- I know. They've been dealt with, don't worry. No, so, I'm just kidding. I didn't like kill anybody. But.

- No, sometimes, people make house visits for ministry, so.

- Oh my gosh. Yeah, I know.

- The Jehovah's Witnesses do it. I'm like hey, I'd like to talk to you about-

- They do, it's true, they do. Yeah. So I had a lot of people tell me that I had secret sin or I'd done something wrong and God was trying to punish me or wake me up to show me my sin or stuff like that that I was like, I mean, I woke up and like try to read my Bible 'cause I didn't know what else to do. Like I feel like if God was a good father and I was doing something that he needed to discipline me for, I'm pretty sure he would tell me what that was. I don't think he would just punish me for no reason and hope that I figured it out. That's not good parenting. You don't just punish your kid and then hope that they understand why. You explain to them and guide them and show them and so I never really believed those people but there were hard times where I had to explain that to people and like help them understand that it's not my fault. And it's

weird to like defend yourself in that way and say, I guess in this analogy, I'm Jesus and you're wrong but. No, not really but.

- But even the Apostle Paul says, he said, "I had a thorn in my flesh" meaning I had a physical injury that caused pain and he says, "Repeatedly, I asked the Lord to take it." And he said, "My grace is sufficient for you. My power is made perfect in weakness."

- Perfect in weakness.

- And so the guy who lays hands on people and they're healed, he lays hands on himself and he's not healed.

- Yeah, same thing with Jesus. A lot of his ministry is healing people and helping people out of difficulties and raising people from the dead and he died and God raised him but that was a process for him. It was hard. I mean this whole prayer is really raw and real and it wasn't easy. It's hard to trust in the middle of it.

- What about for those that are hearing this and they think if I just have more faith, God would heal me And it's a failure in my faith.

- Yeah, yeah. I think I've heard that a lot. People have told me that a lot that if I just had more faith, I would get healed but that puts all of the pressure on us. It makes us the ones that can make ourselves be healed. It takes the power away from Jesus choosing and supporting us and loving us. It just makes it so that it's our fault which is just not true all the time. I mean we live in a fallen world that things are gonna happen and it's not always a direct result of our sin or our lack of faith or something that we're doing wrong. Sometimes, we're just victims of a fallen world and sometimes, it's something that God uses to grow our faith and I mean, I'm not thankful that I'm in pain but I've learned a lot through it and I can trust that God is sovereign around it and through it and over it and everything and that somehow, it's part of his plan. And it's not always easy to understand why but just giving a pat answer or a verse that just kinda makes it all feel better, it doesn't take the pain away.

- And there are people that Jesus heals that they have no demonstration of any kind of faith.

- Right, absolutely. I mean dead people. Literally have no faith because they're dead but he raises them anyways. So it doesn't depend on, that's the best example you can use when you're arguing with someone about this. So, pro tip there. I've done this a couple times.

- You're my daughter, yeah.

- Yeah.

- It has been so hard for mommy and I to see you suffer. I mean, mommy has done so much



research.

- Oh, yeah, yeah.

- She's read everything about everything and I just keep giving money to doctors.

- Yeah, yeah.

- So what would you say to those that, should they pursue medical and prayer?

- Absolutely. Yeah, I still pray for healing but I also go to the doctor. Luke was a doctor and he's writing about this and he believes in both that God heals the body and the soul but God also gives us giftings and words to both minister to people in their pain and also physically actually support them and help them in their pain. We're physical and spiritual and we have to take care of both. Absolutely.

- There are so many younger believers that if they had pain or suffering, they would use that as an excuse to rebel against God. That has not been the case with you. You love the Lord. You're a godly young woman. Mommy and I are so proud of you. What kept you from using the suffering as an excuse for rebelling?

- Yeah, I mean I always just look at it like what is on the other side if I were to make that decision of like just forgetting about God and wanting to rebel and things like that and I still wouldn't be healed. Like it wouldn't have actually fixed anything and I'd be miserable because I'd have no hope. Like at least now I have hoped hold onto in the middle of it but if you have no hope and no solution and no God to call out too, I mean that sounds worse than just having a stomach ache. Like at least it's just bad. I mean it just sounds terrible to be separate from God. So it just doesn't seem like a better option to me. I don't know, that's like a very logical way that I think but it just doesn't seem like a better option, so.

- Do you still believe that God is a loving and good father even though you have chronic pain and suffering.

- Yeah, absolutely. If Jesus had to go to the cross, that's his son. I mean that's crazy that he could allow that to happen but that was, if Jesus wouldn't have done that, we wouldn't be here, we couldn't be saved. So that was his ultimate will that Jesus die and of course, we are all gonna suffer. We're not even perfect and we are gonna suffer so if Jesus did, then we will too.

- So the last one, sweetie pie. How does pain and suffering actually allow us to have deep meaningful ministry to others?

- Yeah, I've noticed this since getting married because Landon also has chronic pain and just got a hip replacement last year so we're like one year of marriage going on 65 but we're both

like really physically old. So, I think that if I had not been through all that I've been through, it'd be really hard for me to empathize with him and to be there for him and like having been through surgery, having been to so many doctor's appointments and all the frustrations, all the testing. If I wasn't able to be there for him when he was recovering and really be emotionally present for him, that would have been really hard for our marriage if I just expected him to move on and keep leading the family and charge forward, like that's not realistic. But I'm very hard on myself and I'm very hard on other people so I probably would. I know, I'm crying. Yeah, everybody gets to see me cry now. It's great. But yeah, it's helped me like love Landon on a deeper level. So, now, you're crying, we're all crying, everyone's crying.

- I want you to pray.

- Okay. Dear Lord, thank you that you empathize with us in our weakness in our pain, that you are a great high priest that feels what we feel. And I thank you that you give us your son to model this and I thank you that you give us people around us that help just to point us towards you when we're in suffering. I pray that no matter what we're going through and what people around us are going through, Lord, that we would look to you as the example of how to respond and how to live in a world that is hard and full of sin. And I pray that you would just help us to see that you're good in the midst of it, that you would reveal yourselves to all of us. Amen.

- Love you.