

November 16

Matthew 26-27; Mark 14-15; Luke 22; John 18

Hey everyone and welcome back to the November 16th daily Accelerator! I'm Brian Smith and I'm an Elder here at CCC and we're going to take a look at 2 Main topics from today's reading: The Garden of Gethsemane and Judas' betrayal.

It was in the Garden of Gethsemane that Jesus prepared Himself for the incomprehensible task that was lying just in front of Him. I think the Passion of the Christ captures this struggle between good and evil that is going on here very well. In the movie, we see the Satanic figure challenging Jesus...taunting him. "Do you really believe that one man can bear the full burden of sin?" the evil figure says. You can feel the gravity of the situation, the anguish, the pure dread of the circumstance.

The awful scene in the Garden of Gethsemane is almost too holy for us to look on, as Jesus wrestles in prayer with all that He knows is about to transpire. The stress that He feels is incredible and medical literature does describe phenomena called "Hematidrosis" which in cases of extreme anguish produces blood and sweat that mingle. One article from a dermatology journal defines Hematidrosis as, "a condition in which capillary blood vessels that feed the sweat glands rupture, causing them to exude blood, occurring under conditions of extreme physical or emotional stress." It goes on to say that acute fear and intense mental contemplation are the most frequent causes, as reported in six cases in men condemned to execution. So this is a very real phenomenon that underscores the intensity of what Christ knew was before him.

And while the physical pain that Jesus had to endure was far more than we could imagine, I tend to believe that a larger driver of his earnest prayer and anxiety here was the impending separation from the Father. It had to be unbearable for him to be separated from his Father, of whom He had been eternally united. Combine THAT with the weight of the sin of the world and the physical and emotional torture that he, in his omniscience, knew was coming; and it makes you wonder how he could love us that much...but he does.

As an interesting, and less weighty aside, there is one tiny detail that appears in Mark that appears nowhere else in Scripture. Only Mark tells us that when Jesus was arrested in the Garden, there was a young man there, somehow accompanying the disciples. He was wearing nothing but a linen garment and was seized by those who came to arrest Jesus. He fled, leaving his garment behind, naked. That is a very strange sort of comment to be left in the text of Scripture. It serves no purpose, since the young man is not identified. No one else ever notes it. Most commentators speculate that this is Mark himself. If this is correct, then it gives us even more confidence about the Gospel Mark has written, for it would indicate that he was an eyewitness to many, if not most, of the events recorded in his book.

All kinds of speculation have been done with regard to the awesome question of why Judas chose to betray Christ. Whatever his motives, Judas finally realize the

significance of what he has done, and he is filled with remorse. We should note that there is a huge difference between remorse and repentance. Judas was filled with remorse -- so much so that he went out and committed suicide. But there is no evidence whatever that he actually repented of his sin. Plenty of people feel bad about their sins. "I never meant for it to turn out this way," they will say, but that does not imply a change of heart and mind and lifestyle that flows out of a realization that you have offended a just and holy God, and are ready to agree with God about your sin and change. Remorse will always accompany true repentance and is *sometimes* the first step toward it, but remorse and repentance is not the same thing.

Standing in somewhat of a contrast to Judas' failure, is Peter's failure. He was so sure that he would never deny his Lord. Jesus had warned him that he would be "*sifted as wheat*" before Satan. Peter, so sure of his devotion to Christ said, "Not me. I'll die before I would deny you, Lord." He even followed Christ into the courtyard outside the tribunal chamber. And then, after the third denial, it says, "*The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter.*" Satan had a clear purpose. It was to destroy Peter. Christ let that temptation occur (though not without warning Peter) but He intercedes. He prays for Peter (and the New Testament says that is what He is doing for us right now). Of course, we later see that Peter is restored—not just due to his remorse, but due to his repentance. Repentance is the place that we don't have any scriptural evidence Judas ever came to.

May we come to true repentance for any sin in our lives and may we remember the price our Savior paid to offer forgiveness when we do.