



The Unpassable Cup Luke 22:39–46

Intro: Do you remember the “hot potato” game you played as a child in which you quickly passed on an object to someone else? As an adult, you learned there are some things you cannot pass but must keep yourself.

At first glance the Garden of Gethsemane appears to be one of those items. It is where heaven’s obedience met earth’s worst agony.

But, in spite of appearances, Luke does not present Jesus as a helpless victim but as the willing Son who prays, yields, and obeys when the weight sin presses down upon Him.

To best understand what is happening we need to remember Luke’s primary theme for writing:

Luke 19:10 – *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.*

This explains both Jesus identity and purpose.

So, the Garden is not incidental, nor accidental, it is an illustration of divine providence moving to fulfil an agreement made before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4) and a promise made at the beginning of time (Gen 3:15).

APP: At the same time, Christ’s full humanity in this moment teaches us how to endure our own unpassable cups

Transition: As we enter the garden with Jesus, Luke moves us along with Jesus so that our hearts better understand his heart for the Father, and us, while also showing us how to trust God when our suffering cannot be avoided.

We sing about Jesus’ birth being a “holy night,” but this is a holy night, leading to many sacred moments like,

- 1 – The Last Supper – Thursday night
- 2 – The Garden prayer
- 3 – The Arrest

- 4 – The Jewish trials – Early Friday morning
- 5 – The Roman trials
- 6 – The Crucifixion – Friday at 9am

First: See How Jesus Prepares for Temptation. 39-40

And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. ⁴⁰ And when he came to the place, he said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.”

a) *As was his custom.* 39b

Jesus leaves the upper room and goes “as was His custom” to the Mount of Olives.

This phrase reminds us that prayer was not an emergency response for Him; it was His steady rhythm. This was a lifetime rhythm.

This is how Jesus began his ministry -

1 – Luke 3:21-22 – *Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”*

This is how he continued his ministry: Luke 4:1-13; 6:12-13; 9:18-20; 28-29; 21-22; 1-4, here and 23:34.

b) If him, us more. – 40 – *Pray that you may not enter into temptation.*

When He tells the disciples, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation,” He reveals that spiritual collapse often begins in prayerlessness. We can see the need to pray in 3 things:

1 – Human vulnerability – *Matthew 26:41 – The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*

Paul calls it a “body of death” (Ro 7:25).

2 – Active warfare – He’s just told them Satan is after them.

1 Peter 5:8 - Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Last week Jesus told the disciples they overestimated their abilities and underestimated the devil.

Human vulnerability and spiritual warfare create the perfect storm for disaster.

3 – Divine protection – His encouragement mirrors **Matt 6:13 – ...lead us not into temptation.**

APP: Is God using these two texts to strengthen our corporate prayer life? Your personal prayer life?

- Do not wait for crisis to develop a prayer life. Build it now.
- Constant prayer is the only way to resist habitual sin.
- Parents, model dependence on God before your children by praying openly and consistently.

Transition: Having urged His disciples to pray, Jesus moves deeper into the garden, showing us not only how to prepare for temptation, but also how to face suffering itself.

Second: See How Jesus Submits to the Father's Will. 41-44

And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done. And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

a) The solitude – *"And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw..."*

There are prayers the disciples can pray, and primarily for themselves.

The prayer Jesus prays is not just for himself, but for God's glory and our wellbeing. Ever since his birth, really, Jesus has been bearing the weight of our sin (Think about the 'weight' of that thought.

But now that weight begins to make its heaviness more felt, witnessed in,

- b) His sincerity – *"Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me"*
- c) His need for strength – *"And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him"*

Isaiah 49:8 - The Servant of the Lord is helped by God to endure suffering.

d) The reaction – *"And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground"*

Matthew 26:38 - My soul is very sorrowful, even to death...

Note: What happened to Jesus is called, *hematidrosis*, a rare medical condition in which the capillary blood vessels that feed the sweat glands rupture, causing them to exude blood along with sweat. It typically occurs under extreme emotional stress, fear, or anguish. Modern case

studies appear in journals confirming hematidrosis as a recognized, though rare, physiological reaction to intense emotional distress.

(Jerajani, H. R., Jaju, B. P., Phiske, M. M., and Lade, N. (2009). “Hematidrosis: A rare clinical phenomenon.” *Indian Journal of Dermatology, Venereology and Leprology* 75, no. 1: 74–76.

Holoubek, J. E., and Holoubek, A. B. (1996). “Blood, sweat and fear: A classification of hematidrosis.” *Journal of Medicine* 27, nos. 3–4: 115–133.

Manonukul, J., Wisuthsarewong, W., Chantorn, R., et al. (2008). “Hematidrosis: A pathologic process or stigmata? A case report with comprehensive histopathologic and immunoperoxidase studies.” *American Journal of Dermatopathology* 30, no. 2: 135–139.

Zhang, F.-K., Zheng, Y., Luo, Y.-Y., and Liu, J.-H. (2013). “Clinical analysis of 7 cases of hematidrosis and review of the literature.” *Chinese Medical Journal* 126, no. 16: 3058–3061).

*Man of sorrows what a name
for the Son of God, who came
ruined sinners to reclaim:
Hallelujah, what a Savior!*

Friends, think with me about the deep, deep, significance of what we are witnessing. God, in kindness to us, has pulled back the curtain on the most intimate moment between him and his Son. Five thousand years of human history have reached its zenith in this Garden. The ramifications are beyond expression to explain but let me try. Look again at what we have seen -

1. The Perfect Obedience of the Son

Jesus’ words — “*Not my will, but yours be done*” (Luke 22:42) — express the heart of His mission.

- His submission reverses Adam’s rebellion in the garden of Eden. Where Adam said, in effect, “*Not your will, but mine*,” Jesus says, “*Not my will, but yours*.”
- Paul captures this in Romans 5:19 - “*For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous.*”
- This obedience demonstrates that salvation is accomplished not only by Jesus’ death but also by His lifelong submission to the Father’s will (Philippians 2:8).
- Our salvation required the passive and active obedience of Jesus.

a) Christ’s *active obedience* refers to his perfect lifelong obedience to the law of God, his fulfillment of every command, his sinless righteousness, and his positive conformity to the Father’s will. This grants us imputed righteousness.

b) Christ's *passive obedience* refers to his willing submission to suffering and death on the cross — his acceptance of the penalty that our sins deserved.

The term “passive” comes from the Latin *passio* (“suffering”), not from inactivity. This ensures the removal of our guilt.

His *active obedience* secured the righteousness we need to be justified.

His *passive obedience* removed the guilt we deserved.

Both are seen in **Romans 4:25 – *He was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification***”

In the OT, it is also symbolized in the two goats that symbolized these two aspects of Jesus' obedience to the Father.

1 – Passive obedience - The first goat was slain and his blood sprinkled on the mercy seat representing propitiation, substitution, the covering for our sin in Leviticus 16:15-16. That's Christ's passive obedience, his willingness to die as our sin-bearer.

Hebrews 9:12 - *He entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of His own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.*

2 – Active obedience - The second goat, called the scapegoat, was kept alive but sent into the wilderness symbolizing expiation, the removal of guilt, in Leviticus 16:21-22. That's Christ's active obedience, fulfilling all righteousness for our standing before God.

John 1:29 — *Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*

Psalm 103:12 — *As far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us.*

But that's not all Jesus is doing in the Garden.

2. The Reality of His Humanity

Gethsemane displays the true humanity of Christ.

- He experiences anguish, fear, and loneliness, not sinfully, but fully humanly.
- **Hebrews 4:15 - *“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”***
- The “cup” (Luke 22:42) symbolizes divine wrath, the full judgment against sin which Jesus is bearing as the obedient Son.

3. The Fulfillment of Redemptive Purpose

Jesus' prayer marks the decisive moment where we see Jesus fully embrace the atonement required for the Father's glory and our salvation.

- He accepts the Father's plan of salvation and voluntarily embraces the cross.
- This fulfills **Isaiah 53:10 - "It was the will of the Lord to crush him."**
- The prayer ensures that the coming suffering is not random injustice (cosmic child abuse according to Richard Dawkins) but divine design: the Lamb submitting to the will of God for the redemption of humanity.

4. The Revelation of the Cost of Atonement

The agony of Gethsemane shows us the cost of our atonement

- The sweat "*like drops of blood*" (Luke 22:44) reveals the immense spiritual and emotional cost of bearing divine wrath.
- It underscores that our redemption required not only Jesus' physical death but his full submission to the weight of human sin and divine judgment.

6. The Victory of the Will of God

The Garden of Gethsemane is the battlefield where the victory of Calvary is secured.

- Jesus' private, "yes" to the Father in the Garden made His public, "*It is finished*," on the Cross possible.

APP: Public victories are often the result of private devotion.

- Theologically, this is where the Son's human will aligns perfectly with the divine will, a union that makes our redemption effectual.

Psalm 40:7-8 – (Hebrews 10:7) - *Then I said, 'Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me: I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.*

Transition: As Jesus yields to the Father's will, heaven responds. Strength comes, not from escape, but from endurance.

Third: See How Jesus Teaches Us to Persevere. 45-46

And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, ⁴⁶ and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation."

The battle for your soul is shaped by the conflict between God's kingdom and Satan's and fought on the soil of your heart.

- a) The danger of spiritual weariness - *Why are you sleeping?*

Jesus had just warned Peter and the disciples that Satan wanted to "sift" all of them.

Sift = σινιάζω (siniazō), meaning *to sift, shake, or separate by agitation*, like a farmer shaking wheat in a sieve to separate the grain from the chaff, what is essential from what is unnecessary.

Satan wanted to prove Peter's faith to be false. Jesus intended it to refine Peter's faith, proving it real.

- b) The repetition of the warning - *Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.*

The real battle was not outside of them, in the Garden, but inside of them.

- c) The benefit of a Savior -

GOSPEL: This friends, is why we all need a Savior. When they slept, He prayed. When they succumbed to weakness, He stood in surrender. We might say, "*He was God,*" but he endured the Garden in his humanity.

Conclusion: In Gethsemane, we see the true cost of our salvation. Jesus began the obedience that would lead to the cross. Jesus prepared for temptation through prayer, submitted to the Father's will in surrender, and persevered in obedience to death. What began in prayer ended in redemption.

Hebrews 5:7 - *In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death...*

APP: When your own "cup" cannot pass, remember His. God does not always remove the cup, but He always provides grace to drink it

Hebrews 2:18 - *For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*

Note: CG leaders, I mentioned in *The View from My Study* on Monday that this Garden is an essential step in the overarching metanarrative of Scripture, demonstrating the one story, one hero theme of biblical theology expressed in creation, Fall, redemption and restoration. There is not time to develop that theme in the sermon, but it is worth noting. (Question 12 in the CG questions speaks to it). Here is just a glimpse of that reality -

1 - In Genesis 2–3, humanity’s story begins in a garden (Eden) where sin and death enter through Adam’s disobedience.

2 - In Luke 22:39–46, the story turns in another garden (Gethsemane) where Jesus, the second Adam (cf. Romans 5:17–19; 1 Corinthians 15:45), chooses obedience and begins to reverse the curse.

3 - In John 19:41, redemption is completed in a garden tomb, where Jesus conquers death.

4 - Finally, in Revelation 22:1–3, the story ends in a restored garden-city, where the curse is lifted and fellowship with God is fully restored.

In short, Gethsemane stands at the center of the Bible’s grand narrative, the hinge where the curse of Eden begins to be undone through the obedience of Christ.



CG Questions: Luke 22:39–46

Observation (What does the text say?)

1. When and where does this passage occur?
2. What actions or phrases stand out in this passage (vv. 39–46)?
3. How does Luke describe Jesus' emotions and physical condition in verse 44?
4. What commands does Jesus give to His disciples, and how do they respond?

Interpretation (What does the text mean?)

5. What does Jesus' prayer in verse 42 reveal about His relationship with the Father?
6. Why is it significant that an angel appears to strengthen Jesus (v. 43)?
7. What does this passage teach us about the reality and weight of Jesus' suffering before the cross?
8. What does Jesus mean when He tells the disciples to "pray that you may not enter into temptation" (vv. 40, 46)?

Correlation (Where else does the Bible say this?)

9. Compare this moment to Philippians 2:8 and Hebrews 5:7–8. How do these passages deepen our understanding of Jesus' obedience?
10. Read Matthew 26:36–46 and Mark 14:32–42. What details do they include that complement Luke's account?
11. How does Jesus' submission in Gethsemane fulfill Psalm 40:7–8 and Hebrews 10:7?
12. What other gardens exist in the Bible that might point to and come out of this Garden? Think about Genesis 2:18–27; Song of Solomon 4:12–16; John 19:41 & Revelation 22:1–3.

Application (How can God use this in my life?)

13. When have you faced a moment where obedience to God felt costly or painful? How did you respond?
14. What does Jesus teach us about prayer in moments of fear, pressure, or weakness?
15. How can our group help one another “pray not to enter into temptation” when we face seasons of testing?
16. What private habits of prayer or surrender might God be calling you to strengthen so that you can stand firm publicly?
- 17.



Our Purpose for the TRAP daily devotion

Colossians 3:16 – “*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...*”

This week’s theme

When your cup is unpassable, remember his.

Monday, Nov 17th

Preparing for Temptation in Luke 22:39-40

Think – Jesus left the upper room and went, *as was His custom*, to the Mount of Olives. Prayer was not his reaction to crisis. It was his steady rhythm of life. Even before the weight of sin pressed upon Him on Golgotha, he gained strength through communion with his Father.

Reflect – Spiritual danger results from prayerlessness. In his humanity, Jesus teaches that temptation is resisted not by willpower alone but by prayerful dependence on God. If the sinless Son needed prayer to stand, how much more do we?

Apply – Begin this week by establishing a habit of daily prayer that overflows into the moments of your life. Invite the Lord to shape your life before temptations comes. Then pray again, when temptations arrive.

Pray – Father, help me to understand my dependence on you. Then, keep me in prayerful dependence each and every day.

Tuesday, Nov 18th

Submitting to the Father's Will in Luke 22:41-42

Think – Alone in the garden, Jesus knelt and prayed, “*Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done.*” In that prayer, the will of the Son perfectly aligned with the will of the Father.

Reflect – Where Adam once said, “*Not Your will, but mine,*” Jesus now says, “*Not My will, but Yours.*” The rebellion of Eden begins to be reversed in Gethsemane. The Son's obedience opens the way for our redemption, proving that true freedom is found in surrender. Hallelujah for that Savior!

Apply – Ask the Lord to help you, in the Spirit of Christ, to yield your will to his today. Jesus did it. You can too. Whether in hardship or ease, obedience to God always leads to abundant and eternal life.

Pray – Lord, teach me to trust Your wisdom above my own. Help me to say “yes” even when it is difficult to obey. Amen.

Wednesday, Nov 19th.

Strengthened to Endure in Luke 22:43–44

Think – As Jesus prayed in agony, an angel appeared to strengthen Him. His sweat fell like drops of blood to the ground, revealing both His full humanity and His perfect obedience.

Reflect – Heaven did not remove this cup. God gave Jesus the strength to drink it. Jesus shows that endurance, not escape, is often the Father's answer to prayer. Divine help may not come in the way we expect, but it always comes in time.

Apply – In your moments of fear or temptation today, remember that God meets you in your garden of suffering. He will enable you to endure trials successfully.

Pray – Father, thank You for meeting me in weakness. Give me the ability to endure any unpassable cup and the grace to trust You in the midst of the trial. Amen.

Thursday, Nov 20th.

Persevering in Weakness in Luke 22:45–46

Think – Rising from prayer, Jesus found His disciples sleeping for sorrow. “Why are you sleeping?” He asked. “Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.” Even as they failed, He remained faithful.

Reflect – The real battle was not outside of us but inside of us. The disciples slept while Jesus prayed. Their weariness shows how easily good intentions and our best abilities collapse without dependence on God. Just as Jesus interceded for them, He still intercedes for you.

Apply – Don’t blame circumstances or others for your spiritual failure. Instead, acknowledge your sinfulness, repent of it and ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen your heart. He will hear, forgive you and aid you.

Pray – Lord, help me to take responsibility, to see my sin, confess it and repent of it. Then help me build hedges around my life to protect me. Amen.

Friday, Nov 20th

The Triumph of Obedience in Hebrews 5:7; Romans 5:19

Think – In Gethsemane, Jesus offered up prayers and tears to the One able to save Him from death. But he also knew the cost of his obedience. By that obedience, many are made righteous. The victory of the cross began in the quiet submission of the garden.

Reflect – Here the second Adam succeeds where the first failed. What began in Eden’s rebellion ends in Gethsemane’s surrender. The cup that could not pass became the means of our redemption, showing that God’s will, though costly, is always good.

Apply – When your own cup cannot pass, remember His. God has a purpose for this sorrow or difficulty. Though you may not understand it now, grace will meet you now.

Pray – Father, thank You for Jesus’s obedience. When my will resists Yours, remind me that Your way is the best way for me. Amen.