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St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
2100 16<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Austin, MN 55912-1749  
Pastor Ted Barthels  
Sermon preached on  
February 14, 2016  
1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent

Scripture Lessons: Isaiah 52:13-53:3 Passion: Upper Room 2  
Hymns: 358; 150; 142; 779:1

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Mark 14:32-34

“Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, ‘Sit here while I pray.’<sup>33</sup> And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed.<sup>34</sup> Then He said to them, ‘My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, *even* to death. Stay here and watch.’” (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, our Redeemer Lord, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: Lent is a time for Examining the Passion of Christ  
We might examine the events of the passion of Christ from a perspective of the things that Jesus endured, and we often do. We might examine these events by what other people did to or in response to Jesus, and what they saw happening around Him. In our Sunday Lenten meditations this year we are going to base our study on the things that Jesus said. This will not be a thorough study of all His sayings in the last day before His death. In John's gospel alone we have four chapters that take us through the lessons Jesus taught the disciples on the night He was betrayed, and the High Priestly prayer He offered to God the Father on our behalf that night. However there were a number of other shorter statements Jesus spoke that open our understanding to these events in a deeper way, so that we might grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ and all He

endured for us and our salvation. So it is that this morning we will begin our Sunday Lenten series with a meditation focusing on Jesus' statement to the disciples, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, *even* to death." May the Holy Spirit guide us in a meditation of --

### **THEME: The Sorrow Jesus Endured.**

One of the truths the Spirit would have us appreciate about Jesus' sufferings for our salvation is -

#### **I. Its Spiritual Nature.**

The events of our text follow immediately after the Last Supper in the Upper Room. At the end of the ceremonial feast which took several hours, Jesus led the disciples out of Jerusalem back across the Kidron Valley to the Mount of Olives. There was an olive grove there in a park like setting that was called Gethsemane. We are told that it was a place which the Lord and His disciples frequently visited, and perhaps used as a place to sleep. It was also a place known to Judas. It was very likely already near midnight when they arrived at Gethsemane.

**Mark 14:33-34** And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. <sup>34</sup> Then He said to them, 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, *even* to death. Stay here and watch.

Again we have Jesus asking for the company of His three closest disciples. He desired their support. He opened up to them in this time of great distress. Jesus was troubled. Jesus was deeply distressed. Jesus said that His soul was exceedingly sorrowful, even to death! Everyone that goes through life experiences some sadness in life, inevitably even great sadness. There are times of grief when we lose someone we love. There are times of difficulty when we are facing some ordeal, some sickness that may cause within us great trepidation and dread of those things to come. That is in our minds, and in our emotions. This sorrow of our Lord was on a completely different level, one that we have not experienced.

By making this statement I am in no way belittling the grief and sadness that you have experienced in your life. Without doubt many individuals among us have experienced grief and sadness that can only be described as devastating. What we need to appreciate was that Jesus' grief and sorrow was on an altogether different level.

Start with Jesus noting that His **soul** was sorrowful. Jesus knew all that was coming in His passion. He knew that He would be taken by His enemies and suffer many things at their hands. Surely anyone would dread what was coming. The abuse, the pain, the agonizing death on the cross. But Jesus also knew the spiritual burden that He would bear. He knew that He was to endure the curse of God for the sin of the world. It would be that agony, the spiritual despair that all those who are doomed to hell have waiting for them that burdened Jesus' soul with such deep sorrow.

## **II. The Depth of Jesus' Sorrow**

However Jesus was not only the Son of Mary, He was also the eternal Son of God. For Jesus to be so alienated from His heavenly Father brought another dimension of deep sorrow to His very soul. It was the very crux of the burden that lay before Him, the deepest distress which He would endure, even in the darkest hours of suffering on the cross. The death that lay before Jesus was not only temporal, which in itself would have been a foreign thing for the Son of God to bear. It was also a spiritual death; the Son of God was to be forsaken by God the Father. We do not know that depth of despair that is comes with being forsaken by God. We don't know the depth of despair that comes with bearing the sin of the world.

Already in Gethsemane Jesus was tormented in His heart by the cup of sufferings, the cup of woe that was coming upon Him. We know Jesus' prayer that the Father, if it were possible, would take this cup of suffering away, but Jesus submitted to the Father's will. Jesus knew the necessity of the suffering He was to endure. So it began right there in Gethsemane with the torment of Jesus' soul, with sorrow so deep that He declared it was even unto death. In Luke's gospel we read of this torment and its toll on the Lord.

**Luke 22:44** "And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

This was **after** an angel came and ministered to Jesus in answer to His prayers. This was after He was strengthened by this angel that Jesus was under such duress that His sweat was as great drops of blood falling to the ground. No, we really can't plumb the depth of Jesus' sorrow, but our meditation upon it leads us to consider --

## **III. Its Cause.**

The hymn writer Johan Heerman addressed this question almost 400 years ago when he wrote:

“Whence come these sorrows, whence this mortal anguish? It is my sins for which Thou, Lord, must languish; Yea, all the wrath, the woe, Thou dost inherit, This I do merit” (The Lutheran Hymnal 143:3).

To find the cause of Jesus’ sorrow in Gethsemane we need only look in the mirror. We look in the mirror and we see our own reflection. It comes back to each of us. It does no good for us to generalize saying it was this world’s sin that caused Jesus sorrow. It was my sin, my guilt, my condemnation that Jesus was taking upon Himself as He entered into the agonizing soul suffering of the passion. I know this because it is not just a physical mirror I look into, but the mirror of God’s law as well. When anyone of us looks into the mirror of God’s law and sees the horror of sin reflecting back at us, the image of sin that darkens our souls, and that has characterized our lives, we know we need look no farther to know what caused this deep sorrow for Jesus in Gethsemane. The cause is found in my sin, and your sin.

But why should Jesus bear our sin? He was here on a mission; a great cause drove Jesus to Gethsemane, and then on to Calvary and the grave. That cause was the salvation of the world. His cause, His purpose in life was to bring salvation to sinners. His cause was to make salvation possible and then see it complete by bringing us to Himself in heaven. And so He told the disciples that night:

**John 14:2-3** I go to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also.

This is the cause for which Jesus gave Himself into such deep sorrow, sorrow of soul, even to the point of death. He was determined, along with His Father in heaven to secure salvation for us. He did all that was necessary for Him to attain that salvation in His passion beginning with the overwhelming sorrow of Gethsemane, and He will bring it to its glorious fulfillment when He receives us to Himself in heaven.

**AMEN.**

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Amen. (Romans15:13)