

The Prayers of Jesus
The Shadow of the Cross
Lesson 7

Jesus' final prayers for His disciples took place at the Passover Seder, which we call the Lord's Supper. After telling His disciples that one of them would betray Him, there was a discussion about the coming Kingdom. Peter vowed his allegiance, to which Jesus told Simon (Peter) that he too, would deny even knowing Him.

Jesus Prayed for Peter

Luke 22:31-34

³¹ "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. ³² But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." ³³ But he replied, "Lord, I am ready to go with You to prison and to death." ³⁴ Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know Me."

1. When a name is mentioned twice in Scripture, that means to listen carefully, for what is about to be said is extremely important. What was Jesus' warning to Peter?

2. What did Jesus say He had already prayed for?

3. How important do you think it was for Peter to know that Jesus had prayed specifically for him?

After Judas left to betray Jesus, He told the remaining eleven disciples that He would not leave them alone, but would ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit.

John 14:15-21

¹⁵"If you love Me, obey My commandments. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. ¹⁷He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive Him because it isn't looking for Him and doesn't recognize Him. But you know Him because He lives with you now and later will be in you. ¹⁸No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you.

¹⁹Soon the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me. Since I live, you also will live. ²⁰When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in My Father, and you are in Me, and I am in you. ²¹Those who accept My commandments and obey them are the ones who love Me. And because they love Me, My Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal Myself to each of them."

4. Jesus talked about a future prayer, asking the Father to send the Holy Spirit. What stands out to you in this mention of prayer?

With the Seder completed, the time had almost come.

John 14:30-31

³⁰"I don't have much more time to talk to you, because the ruler of this world approaches. He has no power over Me, ³¹but I will do what the Father requires of Me, so that the world will know that I love the Father. Come, let's be going."

Agony in Gethsemane

After the Passover Seder, Jesus went out, as usual, to the Mount of Olives, which is about a 15-minute walk from Jerusalem. In the olive grove, there was an olive press, which in Hebrew is called a "Gethsemane." Whether Jesus prayed at the garden every night during the Passover season, then went to Mary and Martha's home; or whether He stayed in the garden every night, is difficult to determine from the text.

Of all Jesus' time of prayer, this night was the most agonizing for Him. The gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke record this with Matthew and Mark being almost identical. Luke, through eyewitness accounts and being a physician, added more physical details. We will look at Luke and Mark side by side.

Luke 22:39-40	Mark 14:32
³⁹ Then, accompanied by the disciples, Jesus left the upstairs room and went as usual to the Mount of Olives. ⁴⁰ There He told them, "Pray that you will not give in to temptation."	³² They went to the olive grove called Gethsemane, and Jesus said, "Sit here while I go and pray."

5. In this first passage, who and what did Jesus ask them to pray for?

6. Knowing what lay ahead for Him, notice who and what Jesus did not ask them to pray for.

	Mark 14:33-34
	³³ He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He became deeply troubled and distressed. ³⁴ He told them, "My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with Me."

7. In Mark's passage, Jesus took His inner circle of three with Him further into the garden. How does the text describe Jesus' emotionally?

Luke 22: 41-42	Mark 14:35-36
⁴¹ He walked away, about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, ⁴² "Father, if You are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from Me. Yet I want Your will to be done, not Mine."	³⁵ He went on a little farther and fell to the ground. He prayed that, if it were possible, the awful hour awaiting Him might pass Him by. ³⁶ "Abba, Father," He cried out, "everything is possible for You. Please take this cup of suffering away from Me. Yet I want Your will to be done, not Mine."

8. What was Jesus' position for prayer in Luke and in Mark?

9. Look at Jesus' prayer, what stands out to you?

To “drink a cup” was a common metaphor for experiencing a traumatic event. In the Old Testament it was often associated with the outpouring of God’s judgment, which is most likely what Jesus was referring to in His prayer.

	Mark 14:37-38
	³⁷ Then He returned and found the disciples asleep. He said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Couldn’t you watch with Me even one hour? ³⁸ Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”

10. After this first agonizing time of prayer, Jesus returned to find His disciples asleep. Why do you think He specially addressed Peter?

	Mark 14:39-40
	³⁹ Then Jesus left them again and prayed the same prayer as before. ⁴⁰ When He returned to them again, He found them sleeping, for they couldn’t keep their eyes open. And they didn’t know what to say.

Mark tells us that Jesus came back to the disciples a second time only to find them asleep again. When Jesus went back to pray a third time, Luke adds an important detail.

Luke 22:43	
⁴³ Then an angel from heaven appeared and strengthened him.	

11. How important do you think this was for Jesus at this moment in time?

Luke 22:44	
⁴⁴ He prayed more fervently, and He was in such agony of spirit that His sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood.	

12. Dr. Luke added the physical aspect of this time of prayer. How would you describe Jesus?

Luke 22:45-46	Mark 14:41-42
⁴⁵ At last He stood up again and returned to the disciples, only to find them asleep, exhausted from grief. ⁴⁶ "Why are you sleeping?" He asked them. "Get up and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation."	⁴¹ When He returned to them the third time, He said, "Go ahead and sleep. Have your rest. But no – the time has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴² Up, let's be going. Look, My betrayer is here!"

13. Looking at the three prayers of Jesus, what stands out to you?