

Lesson 6 | July 11, 2021

Jesus' Prayer of Surrender

Study Text: Matthew 26:36–46; Mark 14:32–42; Luke 22:39–46; John 18:1

Central Truth: Jesus demonstrated surrender to the will of God.

Key Verse: Mark 14:36

[Jesus] said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt (KJV).

Abba, Father," [Jesus] said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will" (NIV).

Learning Objectives

- Comprehend the significance of Christ's surrender to the Father.
- Determine to follow Christ's example by unconditionally surrendering to God.
- Take steps to surrender to God's will in life situations.

Introducing the Lesson

Say: We must not let the prayer of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane lose its significance because it is so familiar. We may, in fact, struggle to pray, "not as I will, but as You will" in our own prayers, yet none of us has faced, or will face, the kinds of trauma Jesus was about to experience. Not only was He facing the most cruel death known to man, He was also carrying the weight of the sins of the entire world—even as He always remained and remains being God the Son. This perspective will help us understand Christ's deep emotion as He prayed.

Adrian Rogers tells this story, "I read an interesting story about Stephen Grellet, a pioneer evangelist to lumbermen in the Rocky Mountains. He felt the Spirit of God leading him to a particular lumber camp to preach. When he got there, the place was absolutely deserted. He said, "Lord, I don't understand, but I'm going to be obedient." So he opened his Bible and preached a full-length message. Then he pled for people to come to Christ.

Years later, a man walked up to him in England and said, "I was the foreman at a lumber camp. I had come back to the camp to get an ax, and I heard you preaching. I stood behind a pile of lumber and listened. As you preached, my heart was warmed, and I accepted Jesus Christ. I later witnessed to four other men. Now, all five of us are missionaries preaching around the world."

Opening Activity—Difficult Prayers of Surrender

Ask: What is the most difficult prayer you have prayed when you needed to surrender to God's will rather than trust your own judgment?

Say: No matter how hard our most difficult prayers have been, we can take comfort in knowing that Jesus understands and empathizes with what we feel because He, too, prayed a prayer of surrender. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

The word “surrender” prompts a number of images in our minds. It literally means to cease resistance and to submit to the authority of another. **When a person surrenders, that person gives up all rights to someone, who then assumes control over his or her life. All personal prerogatives cease in the face of that submission. Stephen Grellet had surrendered.** In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus surrendered to His Father's will. It is difficult to understand precisely what that means, given that Jesus is God the Son. However, Christ's surrender provides a strong example of what our response to God should be.

Part 1—The Garden of Sorrow Concern for His Disciples

John 18:1; Luke 22:39–40

[Jhn 18:1 KJV] 1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

[Luk 22:39-40 KJV] 39 And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. 40 And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

Say: Despite the fact that Jesus was facing the Cross, He was concerned for His disciples. He knew they would be sorely tempted during the coming hours, and He encouraged them to pray for victory over temptations. (Share your highlights from the following text.) ***(Play the video for this lesson, available at RadiantLifeCurriculum.com/Adult).*** (Share your highlights from the following text.)

The Garden of Gethsemane sits on the western slope of the Mount of Olives. In order to arrive there, Jesus and His disciples had to cross the Kidron Valley, which separates the Temple Mount from the Mount of Olives (John 18:1). **Gethsemane literally means “oil press.”** (This would refer to an olive press.) The Garden of Gethsemane was a grove of olive trees, and the traditional site of the Garden still contains such trees.

The Mount of Olives was a common destination for Jesus and His disciples (Luke 22:39). It is clear that Jesus and His disciples were extremely familiar with the terrain and overall setting. **And so, during this crucial time approaching the crucifixion, Jesus led His followers to a place that they knew well.**

Luke recorded Jesus' immediate concern for His closest followers, noting that Jesus said, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation" (verse 40, NIV). While the Gospels of Matthew (26:41) and Mark (14:38) also refer to this, they emphasize Christ's overall anticipation of His passion. **Luke, in contrast, places special focus on how Jesus encourages the disciples to pray for themselves—saying this not once but twice** (see Luke 22:40 and 46).

Jesus was not only burdened concerning His own needs, but also for those who loved Him. **He was keenly aware of what awaited them. Soon, He knew, they would struggle with their faith and later they themselves would deal with suffering in the form of persecution and death. They did not have the strength to pray for themselves, so He interceded on their behalf. Thus, Gethsemane was a "garden of sorrow" for others as well as himself.**

Discuss

? Jesus instructed His disciples to pray that they would not fall into temptation. Why is this a good prayer for believers to pray even today?

? As He looked toward His crucifixion, Jesus was concerned for His disciples. How can we cultivate a practice of looking outside ourselves as we pray?

Overwhelmed with Sorrow

Matthew 26:36–38

[Mat 26:36-46 KJV] 36 Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. 37 And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. 38 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

Say: Whether it is the loss of a loved one, a job, health, or some other traumatic loss, sorrow can be overwhelming. **We can be encouraged to know that even Jesus was overwhelmed with sorrow. Yet He knew He would find strength as He confided in the Father.** When others forsake us, we can find solace in communion with our Heavenly Father. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Matthew emphasizes the deep emotion of Jesus' time in Gethsemane. This Gospel record that Jesus took Peter, James, and John with Him to witness His extreme

distress. Matthew states that “He began to be sorrowful and troubled” (26:37, niv). The depths of His suffering are expressed in His words to the three disciples. “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death” (verse 38, NIV). The expression “to the point of death” indicates the extreme nature of Jesus’ distress.

It is clear that all the events of Christ’s life had now come to a physical, emotional, and spiritual climax. The humiliation of the cross remained before Him. People who loved and cherished Jesus deeply and personally would either abandon Him or not be nearby to offer Him support. The agony that awaited would have to be endured in utter solitude. The fact that His disciples were sleeping at this pivotal hour had made this reality quite clear. Jesus had asked Peter, James, and John to pray and keep watch with Him, but they could do nothing but sleep.

While Jesus lacked human support throughout His ordeal, His Father was present with Him in His hour of trial. God the Father would be Jesus’ Source of comfort and consolation. In Christ’s hour of overwhelming sorrow, divine solace remained available.

Discuss

? Have you ever been in a situation where you were in a significant struggle and there was no one there to support you? How did you feel?

? During this time, in what ways were you able to experience God’s presence?

Resource Packet Item 1: Where It Happened

Distribute the information sheet with the map and photos showing the setting for this lesson. Invite student to talk about what it might have been like for Jesus and the disciples as they moved toward the Garden of Gethsemane.

Part 2— Submission to the Father

If It Be Possible, Remove This Cup

Matthew 26:39–41; Mark 14:35–36

[Mat 26:39-41 KJV] 39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou [wilt]. 40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? 41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed [is] willing, but the flesh [is] weak.

[Mar 14:32-42 KJV] 32 And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. 33 And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; 34 And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch. 35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. 36 And he said, Abba, Father, all things [are] possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt. 37 And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour? 38 Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly [is] ready, but the flesh [is] weak. 39 And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words. 40 And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer him. 41 And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take [your] rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42 Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

Say: While the Gospels recount the temptations of Jesus just after His baptism (see Matthew 4:1–11), it is certain that His testing did not end there. As we read of Him here in the Garden of Gethsemane, we see perhaps the most profound and consequential temptation. He could have escaped, and He prayed to the Father to ask if there was another way to save humanity. Yet, He overcame the temptation to flee. As a result, the plan of salvation moved forward. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

As Jesus anticipated the extraordinary nature of His suffering, He made a plea asking His Father about the possibility of another way. The expression “cup” (Matthew 26:39) is normally a figurative reference to God’s judgment, thus pointing to the sin-sacrifice that awaited the Son of God. In His anguish Jesus desired to see if there was possibly another alternative, even as He did not waver in His commitment to do His Father’s will.

In seeking to understand this cry from Jesus, we need to remind ourselves of His humanity. Jesus was fully human as well as fully divine. Satan had previously tempted Christ, and now a similar temptation was before Him. Was there another way?

Just as all humans face temptation with regard to obeying the will of the Father, so did Jesus. The temptation was real, even if we might struggle to understand what such a temptation involved. **The letter to the Hebrews declares that Christ was**

tempted just as we are: “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” (4:15, niv). Jesus was familiar with the spiritual trials of being human, even though He did not succumb to sin.

The Gospels make it clear that turning back from the ordeal that awaited Him was a choice Jesus could have in fact made. The escape route was in front of Him. Gethsemane lay on the western slope of the Mount of Olives. The eastern slope provided passage to the Judean wilderness, the same escape route taken by His ancestor, David. He could have fled. But instead, He followed perfectly the will of the Father.

Resource Packet Item 2: Overcoming a Final Test

Distribute the work sheet and give students a few minutes to respond individually or in small groups. Ask a few people to share their answers and discuss them.

Discuss

? How hard is it to say, “Not as I will, but as You will”? What examples can you think of where you might need to utter those words?

? Why do you think the disciples did not stay awake during the time that Jesus prayed?

The Way of Suffering

Luke 22:41–42

[Luk 22:41-42 KJV] 41 And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, 42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

Say: Prayer provides a path of submission as our faith is increased by communing with the Father. Jesus knew the human weakness of His disciples, so He instructed them to pray. He knew prayer would be the means through which they would find strength. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

In Christ’s prayer to His Father, we observe that His human struggle gave way to complete submission. The will of the Father was for Jesus to suffer not only the pain of a cruel physical death, but also the agony of the weight of the sins of the entire human race. In Luke 22:41–42, then, we see both Christ’s divinity and humanity manifest.

Jesus may well have been reflecting upon His own struggle when He told His disciples: “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is

willing, but the flesh is weak” (see Matthew 26:41, NIV). He would resist and overcome temptation, and they needed to do the same. Jesus knew that His followers would also need to overcome temptation in order to follow the way of the Lord. Yet He also knew that they would ultimately give way to fear, and scatter as the crucifixion approached.

Prayer would be the disciples’ vital resource in the days ahead. Their ability to appeal to the presence and power of God would be all that separated them from the enemy’s grasp. Jesus’ followers needed to learn to pray. He knew that while their hearts desired to do the will of God, their flesh was in need of the Spirit’s enablement.

Discuss

? In what ways does Christ’s request to have “this cup” pass from Him help you as you confront your own struggle to do the will of God?

? What does Jesus’ exhortation to the disciples to “watch and pray” tell you about your own prayer needs?

Part 3—The Anguish of Jesus Strengthened by an Angel

Matthew 26:42–44; Luke 22:43

[Mat 26:42-44 KJV] 42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. 43 And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. 44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

[Luk 22:43 KJV] 43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

Say: When everyone had deserted Jesus, the Father did not forget Him, but sent an angel to strengthen Him. **As Jesus prayed, strength came not from other people, but from the Father himself.** (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Even though the disciples were not able to help Jesus during His deepest anguish, Jesus was not without comfort. The Father sent an angel to bring Him strength as He prepared for the coming ordeal (Luke 22:43), and made sure that His suffering Son was cared for during these dark hours. That the Father would send an angel to bring assistance to Jesus during these dark hours further highlights this. **In many respects, it brings to memory the occasion of Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness of Judea at the onset of His ministry. There Matthew records that**

when Christ successfully resisted Satan's temptation, angels attended to Him
(Matthew 4:11).

The beginning of Christ's lonely battle had commenced. The suffering had begun. Jesus' physical strength had begun to weaken. He needed assistance to complete the task that awaited. We do not know what specific ministry the angel performed. **Luke simply states that the angel appeared to Him and gave Him strength.**

Resource Packet Item 3: Angels in the Life of Jesus

Distribute the work sheet and, if time permits, have the students work in small groups to complete it. You might assign one set of Scriptures to each small group and let the groups report their findings.

Discuss

? How does God strengthen His people in times of loneliness or anguish?

? What other Bible figures can you name to whom angels appeared?

Extreme Anguish

Matthew 26:45–46; Luke 22:44

[Mat 26:45-46 KJV] 45 And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, 46 And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. 45 And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, 46 And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

Say: Crucifixion is arguably one of the cruelest forms of execution ever practiced by humanity. There was nothing about it that was designed to be humane or merciful in the least; to the contrary, it was meant to be as agonizing as possible. The word "excruciating," which is our word for horrible pain, is derived from the word "crucify" (more specifically, the Latin word *crux*, or "cross"). **However, the anguish of Jesus as He approached the cross went beyond the physical agony of crucifixion. The greater agony was the weight of the sins of the world that He would carry, making**

it possible for us to be reconciled to God. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

It is believed that Luke's words "And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground" (Luke 22:44, NIV), referred to a **medical condition called "hematohidrosis."** **This is a rare condition where people can, amid times of extreme physical or emotional stress, have droplets of blood appear in their sweat.**

Physically, in these rare cases, capillaries that flow into sweat glands rupture and mix blood into the perspiration. It is interesting that Luke (a physician) alone describes this event in the Garden during the extraordinary anguish experienced by Jesus. According to Luke, the droplets were more than a few. Luke states that the drops were falling to the ground as Jesus prayed with extreme urgency.

The Greek word translated "anguish" in Luke 22 (NIV; "agony"; KJV) spoke to extreme struggling and anguish. The battle Jesus was to face not only involved the severity of death through crucifixion, but also an unknowable spiritual experience with profound dimensions. He was to carry the sins of all humanity. **The sheer burden of this reality is beyond all human understanding.**

As Jesus determined to embrace the suffering that was before Him, the totality of His struggle lies well beyond our ability to grasp. It would be a level of suffering never before experienced. **The lonely path before the One who was both human and divine was to be experienced without any help and support once He left the Garden of Gethsemane. Anticipating this, Jesus did the only thing He could do: He engaged in the most earnest prayer.**

Just as Jesus overcame the temptation to bypass the excruciating suffering of the cross at the beginning of His ministry, He faced and conquered it again in the Garden of Gethsemane. **We often think of Jesus' suffering solely in the context of the crucifixion. But, in fact, the suffering began in the Garden of Gethsemane, where He suffered physically and experienced the betrayal of a close companion (Matthew 26:45–46). There, amid these painful trials, Christ endured temptation and fully resolved to drink the "cup" His Father was placing before Him.**

Discuss

? How does taking time to contemplate the events in the Garden of Gethsemane affect your appreciation for Christ's work on the cross on your behalf?

? How does Jesus' example help you as you face your temptations in your daily life?

What Is God Saying to Us?

Say: In the face of greater agony than any human could ever imagine suffering, Jesus modeled perfect obedience as He surrendered to the will of His Father. Without that

surrender, which was followed by sacrifice, we would be forever lost and without hope. God desires that we, too, surrender our will and desires to His perfect will for us.

Living It Out

Ministry in Action

- Examine your life for areas in which you need to surrender to God.
- Spend time in worship, expressing gratitude for all that Jesus has done for you.
- Share the love of Jesus with someone who needs to know Him this week.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday:

Surrender to the Call.

Isaiah 6:1–8

[Isa 6:1-8 KJV] 1 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. 2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. 3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, [is] the LORD of hosts: the whole earth [is] full of his glory. 4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 Then said I, Woe [is] me! for I am undone; because I [am] a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. 6 Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, [which] he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: 7 And he laid [it] upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. 8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here [am] I; send me.

Tuesday:

Reluctant To Surrender.

Jeremiah 38:17–23

[Jer 38:17-23 KJV] 17 Then said Jeremiah unto Zedekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel; If thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon's princes, then thy soul shall live, and this city shall not be burned with fire; and thou shalt live, and thine house: 18 But if thou wilt not go forth to the king of Babylon's princes, then shall this city be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and thou shalt not escape out of their hand. 19 And Zedekiah the king said unto Jeremiah, I am afraid of the Jews that are fallen to the Chaldeans, lest they deliver me into their hand, and they mock me. 20 But Jeremiah said, They shall not deliver [thee]. Obey, I beseech thee, the voice of the LORD, which I speak unto thee: so it shall be well unto thee, and thy soul shall live. 21 But if thou refuse to go forth, this [is] the word that the LORD hath shewed me: 22 And, behold, all the women that are left in the king of Judah's house [shall be] brought forth to the king of Babylon's princes, and those

[women] shall say, Thy friends have set thee on, and have prevailed against thee: thy feet are sunk in the mire, [and] they are turned away back. 23 So they shall bring out all thy wives and thy children to the Chaldeans: and thou shalt not escape out of their hand, but shalt be taken by the hand of the king of Babylon: and thou shalt cause this city to be burned with fire.

Wednesday:

Totally Surrendered to God.
Daniel 3:14–25

[Dan 3:14-25 KJV] 14 Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, [Is it] true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? 15 Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; [well]: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who [is] that God that shall deliver you out of my hands? 16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we [are] not careful to answer thee in this matter. 17 If it be [so], our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver [us] out of thine hand, O king. 18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. 19 Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: [therefore] he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. 20 And he commanded the most mighty men that [were] in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, [and] to cast [them] into the burning fiery furnace. 21 Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their [other] garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 22 Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. 23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, [and] spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. 25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

Thursday:

Deny Yourself To Follow Jesus.
Matthew 16:24–28

[Mat 16:24-28 KJV] 24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any [man] will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my

sake shall find it. 26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. 28 Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

Friday:

Surrender to God's Will.
Acts 21:10–14

[Act 21:10-14 KJV] 10 And as we tarried [there] many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. **11** And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver [him] into the hands of the Gentiles. **12** And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. **13** Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. **14** And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

Saturday:

Submit to God.
James 4:7–10

[Jas 4:7-10 KJV] 7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. **8** Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse [your] hands, [ye] sinners; and purify [your] hearts, [ye] double minded. **9** Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and [your] joy to heaviness. **10** Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.