



## DEXTER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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**Gethsemane**

**March 7, 2010**

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**Mark 14:32 - 41**

How many of you ran away from home at least one time, from the time you could walk until you got your drivers license? If you go back there, the awful emotions were probably directed at your parents. You didn't really think about what you were running to; you were just running away. Starting with your driver's license, how many have tried to run away from God? It usually happens when you say "God, what is your will in this situation?" And if you're honest, you know what God would say, so you ignore it. You tone down your conscience by deciding "There is no God. Or if there's a God, He's like the Creator and then He went on to do something else. He's not personal, He's not paying attention." So you adjust your theology to allow you to get involved in some things or change how you live. Chances are, you still believe. You just don't want to 'do' that right now. You snuck away from God into a relationship, or some financial thing, or maybe God was nudging you toward ministry, or some service occupation, or toward leading a ministry here at church, and you said "No way. I'm not doing that."

Jesus never ran. He never snuck away. Though He could have. Sometimes I wonder why Jesus did what He did. Why didn't He sneak away into the night and just let his teachings hang out there, rather than Him hang out there on the cross? He had the perfect opportunity the night He was betrayed by Judas...

Mark 14:32 *"They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." 33 He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. 34 "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch." 35 Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. 36 "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." 37 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? 38 Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." 39 Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. 40 When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him. 41 Returning the third time, he said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."*

*33 He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled.* The rest of his disciples were likely sitting near the entrance of the olive garden, and Peter, James, and John went further in with Him. As they walked, Jesus became noticeably distressed. The Greek word means literally "alarmed." And troubled means "in extreme anguish." He told them:

*34 "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch." 35 Going a little farther, Jesus fell to the ground...* The full impact of His death and its spiritual consequences struck Jesus and He staggered under its weight. The prospect of alienation from His father horrified Him.

*"and Jesus prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him.*

- Jesus is asking His Father if this hour—God's appointed time when Jesus would suffer and die—might pass.

36 "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me.

- This cup refers to the same thing: either human suffering and death, or, more likely, God's wrath against sin, which means not only physical death but spiritual suffering and death. Jesus takes the full force of sin and all its consequences on Himself.
- "Abba Father" occurs only 2 other times. It was the way young Jewish children address their fathers. He was in such a love relationship with God, it was as if Jesus is saying "Papa, if I drink this, I will lose you. Our relationship will be disrupted."
- It's almost as if He were saying "God, isn't it good enough for me to be willing to go through with this, rather than actually having to? (That'd be my prayer too.)"
- Jesus was saying "Please just remove the hour. You know I'm willing. Let it bypass me before I drink it." And Jesus prays a prayer of submission to God's will as He went to the cross.

*Yet not what I will, but what you will."*

- Okay, this is heroic. Jesus lays aside all His feelings, all His fears, all His emotions, even His will. He will not be governed by all the stuff that governs us; He will be governed by God's will. That's His sacrificial death.

Living by your will is really downplayed in our society today. It's so much less exciting. But it's the way to life—life through death.

**People who have only lived can never experience what those of us who have died and now live experience.**

I sometimes wonder if I were Jesus, if I'd have just slipped away into the night and disappeared. Took a fast boat to Egypt or somewhere, to live the rest of my life in obscurity.

If a major theme in life is good versus evil; if sin is a reality; if the world is not the way God originally intended it, and if that battle is played in every human heart—your heart and mine; if it is a war for your soul, then there must come a time when the battle is between you and God.

There must come a time in your life when God will rescue you from your self: your past, your sin, your brokenness, your selfishness, your shame, your fears, and your pain. If God doesn't, then those things will rule you. You'll live in fear. You'll live with your past hounding you. You'll live out your brokenness. You'll hurt people. You'll live self-centered. You'll live in fear of your shame. You'll be defined by your pain.

Because it is so profound, God will wrestle with you; though He will not overwhelm you. God refuses to violate human freedom. That's the difference between Christianity and Islam. According to the Bible, God created people with the ability to make choices in His own image, not puppets or robots. That means He will not force you. But God will expose you. For Him to do His best in your life, and for *you* to do your best, you must bring your worst. Even Jesus' human will had to conform, and it was with God. *Our* wills must be broken. You and I *must* be broken. Our sins have to be exposed and given to God. It's awful to look at your own sin. If the people around me knew my past, knew my sin, knew my shame, they wouldn't want to be associated with me. We're afraid to be "found out." You and I try to hide them, to cover them up. Like Adam and Eve in the bushes in the Garden of Eden, hiding from God. We try to sneak away at night. And then Satan tries to shove them in our face, to define us by our past, our mistakes. Whether it's us, or Satan, either way we're being defined by them. But Jesus said in Gethsemane "I will take them, (though I don't want to), though I will die for doing so. Now you go and live. (And later on He tells us to go tell a bunch of people so they can have this too)."

And just as we're to show the world what it looks like to live as a Christ-following salesman, or athlete, or mom, or a Christ-following banker, or law enforcement officer, or retired person, or teacher, or motorcycle rider, we must show the world what it looks like to be raised to new life out of hopelessness, or divorce, or addictions, or abuse.

Have you felt futility and hopelessness and *not* run into the night to hide? Then you have understood more about death than this world is prepared to speak. When you *face* your Gethsemane, you show the world of

what it is like to live—to really live—in a pain-filled, shame-filled world, sin-filled world. And the emptiness, the overwhelming feeling doesn't have to consume us anymore—because Jesus, our Savior, our resurrected Lord went through it. He took all that on Himself—and in the end, gave us the answer: Resurrection. New life. Resurrection-life! The only way there? To suffer. To surrender. To die to yourself and live for Christ.

Christians are a people who have known death and are not afraid of it. To close up is to say 'Death wins.' To sneak away and hide is to say 'Death wins.' Do you see? In the face of everything changing in the world, in the face of every kind of trouble, every kind of past smacking you in your face, Jesus is still the best we have to offer. He went through it all for you. He is our Savior. So we offer Him today.

## **STUDY GUIDE**

### **Luke 2—6**

**Monday: Read Luke 2.** Okay, this should sound vaguely familiar. The Birth of Jesus (1-20). Remember these events happened to people in their ordinary lives. How has God broken in to your ordinary life lately? Jesus Presented in the Temple (21-40). How has Christ brought “the falling and rising” of people throughout the world? The Boy Jesus at the Temple (41-52). One of the only boyhood accounts of Jesus. Pray to be filled with “wisdom and grace,” (v.40), “stature, and in favor with God and people.” (v.52). Did you grow up thinking about God always watching you, to whom you were responsible?

**Tuesday: Read Luke 3.** John the Baptist Prepares the Way (1-20). Who have been “John the Baptists” in your life, showing you the way, leading you to Christ? Take time to thank them. What would John suggest you do to show repentance? The Baptism & Genealogy of Jesus (21-38). This genealogy differs from Matthew because Luke goes back to Adam, and traces through Mary. Meditate on the humanity of Jesus today.

**Wednesday: Read Luke 4.** The Temptation of Jesus (1-13). After it is over, Luke says Satan leaves “till an opportune time” (v.13). When is Satan's most “opportune time” in your life? Chances are, when you are Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired. (HALT). Think about it, and take care of yourself! Jesus' Ministry Begins (14-30). Jesus reads the scroll of Isaiah. He has 5 goals: preaching, helping people really live, acts of mercy, working for fair and just social structures, and celebrating God's grace with the disheartened. How are we doing? Jesus Heals Many (31-44). How is Jesus' authority bringing freedom to you?

**Thursday: Read Luke 5.** Jesus Calls the First Disciples (1-11). How did, or how is, Jesus getting your attention? Have you responded? Jesus Heals More People (12-26). How are you like the friends of the paralyzed man, or his friends? Would you “raise the roof” to help one more find Christ? The Calling of Levi & Questions about Fasting (27-39). “It's not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick...” (31). What does Jesus mean by this?

**Friday: Read Luke 6.** On the Sabbath (1-11). The Twelve Apostles (12-16). The Sermon on the Plain (17-49). The upside down Kingdom that Jesus describes: blessings for lowly things, love for enemies, judging, and true fruit. Which is the hardest to swallow? The easiest? Could you live this way?