**Matthew 26:36-46**

Introduction

I. Jesus as God and man

A. As Son of God, Jesus was perfect and was the perfect model for us. We don’t use our understanding of ourselves to understand Jesus. We use our understanding of Jesus to understand ourselves.

B. As a human, Jesus had to learn obedience. In eternity past he never had to grapple with the will of the Father, but as a human he had to wrestle with that just as we do. The most vivid picture of this is the Garden of Gethsemane

II. Context for Gethsemane

A. The Raising of Lazarus at Bethany

 That generated a crowd that followed him to Jerusalem

 Jesus wept: shows his real human emotion.

Perhaps he was weeping at the reality of death in general, but perhaps he was weeping as he anticipated his own coming death and resurrection

B. The triumphal entry into Jerusalem

 Jesus’ manifestation as king

C. The cleansing of the temple courts

It was Passover week so many people had gathered in Jerusalem to offer sacrifices for their sins, and the religious leadership was taking advantage of this by charging inflated prices for animal sacrifices. Jesus takes a whip and drives people out and overturns tables. He was anger: we see his real human emotion.

D. Jesus tells a series of parables that denounce the religious leadership of the time

E. Jesus’ final public address: “the 7 woes” against the religious leadership. Again his raw emotion comes out.

F. The Passover meal in the upper room

1. Egypt: slaughtered a lamb and wiped its blood on their doorposts so that the angel of the Lord would “pass over” their home and not destroy their firstborn.

 2. The Passover took place on Thursday night before Sabbath.

3. Jesus announces a huge downer: one of the disciples will betray him. This drastically changes the tone of the evening. Judas actually gets up and leaves the table—that’s a huge dynamic change in the evening.

4. The breaking of the bread and the pouring of the cup. Jesus uses a visceral metaphor: “This is my bread and blood. Eat and drink it.” The disciples probably did not understand what he was saying at the time. Jesus is saying, “I am the sacrificial lamb. This a new covenant based on my sacrificial death.” You could probably smell the offerings of the Passover lamb in the temple at that time.

5. Then Jesus says, “tonight every single one of you will desert me.” Another huge emotional downer.

The Passage

I. Jesus’ emotional state

“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”

 He is saying something like “the sorrow is killing me” or “I want to die to end the pain.”

II. Jesus’ prayer, part I

 “If it is possible, please take this cup from me.”

That is not a resolved individual. He is struggling to align his will with the Father’s. He’s wrestling in his humanity to accept God’s will for him.

III. Jesus and the disciples

 You couldn’t stay

 The spirit is willing but the body is weak: Jesus was wrestling with this very reality

IV. Jesus’ prayer, part II and part III

We see a transition in the struggle to coming into alignment with the will of the Father. This comes through reaching out to the Father through prayer

Conclusion

I. It’s encouraging to know that the struggle Jesus experienced was not sin. It is ok to struggle as our wills come into alignment with God’s

II. Through our struggles, we have Jesus as a wonderful person to go to with whom we don’t have to clean up, but we can come to him raw and unvarnished.

III. Hebrews 4:14-16 is a wonderful encouragement to us

IV. Attempting to engineer the outcomes to our problems is idolatry. God is the one writing the story

**Discussion Questions**

1. What was the most helpful or encouraging idea from Sunday’s message for you?

2. On Sunday the following statement was made: “We don’t use our understanding of ourselves to understand Jesus. We use our understanding of Jesus to understand ourselves.” What did you understand that statement to mean?

3. How did walking through the context leading up to Gethsemane add to or change your understanding or appreciation for those final days?

4. Consider again Jesus’ emotional state in the garden (“my soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death”) as well as his prayer (“Father, if it be possible let this cup be taken from me”).

5. How does the idea of Jesus truly struggling to align his will with the Father’s sit with you?

6. Read Hebrews 4:14-16 together and especially consider the idea that we have a high priest who can sympathize with our weaknesses and has been tempted like us in every way. Where specifically do you need to be reminded of that fact?