

Preparation through Prayer

Text: Ephesians 6:13-18

Introduction:

1. We must prepare ourselves to live the life of a Christian.
2. We are to count the cost before becoming Christians (Luke 14:26-30).
3. The Christian Armor is to be worn in preparation for battle.
4. In fact, part of our armor is the “preparation of the gospel of peace” – the firm footing on which a Christian stands.
5. From the life of Jesus, we learn the role of prayer in preparation for following God...

I. Preparation for Decision

- A. Too often, we make bad decisions and get into trouble – and, then, we turn to God in prayer.
 1. We want God to get us out of trouble, but we fail to let Him keep us from trouble in the first place.
 2. We ought to pray before every important decision.
- B. Before He began His ministry, Jesus prayed (Luke 3:21-22).
- C. Before He preached, Jesus prayed (Mark 1:35-38).
- D. Before He selected His apostles, Jesus prayed (Luke 6:12-16).
- E. Before He manifested His glory, Jesus prayed (Luke 9:28-32).

II. Preparation for Temptation (Matthew 4:1-11)

- A. After His baptism, Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit.
 1. Mark says that He was “driven out” by the Spirit (1:12).
 2. Luke says that He was “full of the Holy Ghost” (4:1).
 3. This means that Jesus’ going into the wilderness was by instruction of the Holy Spirit.
 4. Robertson writes: “It was a strong impulsion by the Holy Spirit that led Jesus into the wilderness to think through the full significance of the great step that he had now taken. That step opened the door for the devil and involved inevitable conflict with the slanderer.”
- B. Following His baptism and before His temptation, Jesus fasted for forty days.
 1. It is good to remember the relationship between fasting and prayer.
 2. They are joined together 11 times in the Scripture – from the Old Testament to the early church.
 3. For what did Jesus need to pray?
 - a. His recent decision
 - b. His recent commitment
 - c. The work that was before Him
 - d. The sacrifices demanded of Him
 - e. The temptations that would soon befall Him
- C. Jesus was able to resist the temptations of the devil.
 1. He had prepared Himself for them by studying God’s Word.
 2. He had prepared Himself for them by praying to God.

3. He had prepared Himself for them by devoting Himself to preparation.
- D. We can resist temptation also, if we prepare for it now.
 1. Matthew 6:9-13 – *Lead us not into temptation...*
 2. Matthew 26:41; Luke 22:40, 46
 3. Psalm 19:13; Proverbs 30:8-9; 1 Peter 4:7
- E. Too often, we wait to pray until we are already in trouble.

III. Preparation for Death (Matthew 26:36-45)

- A. The name Gethsemane means, “oil press.”
 1. It was located near a group of olive trees.
 2. But, it was here that our Lord’s heart would be pressed.
- B. Jesus took the disciples with Him to Gethsemane.
 1. He desired to have them close while He prayed.
 2. He told them to pray while He also prayed (Luke 22:40).
 3. He took Peter, James and John to His heart in the heart of the Garden.
 - a. They alone had seen His face filled with compassion at the house of Jairus as He raised his daughter from the dead.
 - b. They alone had seen His face shine with glory on the Mount of Transfiguration.
 - c. It was fitting that they alone see His face filled with agony in the Garden of Gethsemane.
 4. In times of anguish, we need the prayers and support of our brethren.
- C. Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane was a prayer of solitude.
 1. Luke 22:41 – He was “withdrawn from them about a stone’s cast.”
 2. Though He wanted the disciples close to Him, ultimately He would stand alone before God.
 3. So must we all...
- D. Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane was a prayer of sorrow.
 1. Mark 14:33 – Jesus was “sore amazed” and “very heavy.”
 2. Mark 14:34 – “My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death.”
 3. Luke 22:44 – “In an agony, He prayed more earnestly.”
 4. Luke 22:44 – “His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”
 5. In times of sorrow, we must turn to our Father in Heaven.
 6. Life comes with trouble, but we can be prepared to face it if we lean upon our Savior (cf. 1 Peter 5:7; 1 Samuel 30:6; Psalm 55:22; 56:3; 142:4-5).
- E. Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane was a prayer of simplicity.
 1. Matthew 6:7; 23:14
 2. A prayer need not be eloquent to be heard by the God of Heaven.
 3. Just speak from the heart (cf. Romans 8:26).
- F. Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane was a prayer of supplication.
 1. Mark 14:36 – “Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me.”
 2. Even though He knew God’s plan, Jesus was not afraid to ask God exactly what He truly desired.
 3. Prayer is part of our armor to prepare us for battle, even with death (Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 4:6-7; Hebrews 5:7-9).

- G. Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane was a prayer of submission.
 - 1. Matthew 26:53 – He could have called 10,000 angels!
 - 2. He desired to be delivered from the suffering of the cross.
 - 3. Yet, Jesus prayed that God's will would be done, not His own.
 - 4. If we truly want to be prepared for life and death, we must be in total submission to the will of God.
- H. Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane was a prayer of sincerity.
 - 1. Luke 22:43 – “And there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him.”
 - 2. He was heard by God because He prayed in reverence and sincerity (Hebrews 5:7-9).
 - 3. He was sincere enough that even though He was not delivered from suffering, He remained obedient to God.
 - 4. “Thy will be done” was not just a slogan!
- I. There is no greater challenge we will face that confronting death.

Conclusion: *Are you prepared?*