A Beautiful Prayer

Introduction:

1. Both the lyrics and melody of this song were written by Luther G. Presley in 1937.
2. He was born on March 6, 1887, and died on December 6, 1974.
3. Presley began studying music at the age of 14 and wrote his first song when he was 17.
4. In his lifetime, it is estimated that he penned between 1,100 and 1,500 hymns.
5. He wrote "When All Of God's Singers Get Home," "A Friend Like You," and "I'd Rather Have Jesus" – but he is most well-known for "When The Saints Go Marching In."

In the Bible we read of a beautiful prayer,
A prayer sent to heaven above;
It was prayed by a heart that was laden with care
And filled with such wonderful love.

I. A Beautiful Prayer in a Garden of Supplication
   A. The words of this powerful song transport the singer into the Garden of Gethsemane to reflect upon the anguish of Jesus as He awaited the cross.
   B. The name Gethsemane means, "oil press" (Matthew 26:36-38).
      1. It was located near a group of olive trees (Luke 22:39).
      2. But it was here that the Lord's heart would be pressed.
   C. As He fell upon His face, Jesus offered a prayer of supplication to the Father (Matthew 26:39-44).
      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.
   D. Jesus provided a powerful example of faithfulness in prayer.

You can catch the sad tone of His voice as He said,
"Thy will not my own must be done."
As a lamb to the slaughter He soon must be led
To die as the Crucified One.

II. A Beautiful Prayer in a Garden of Submission
   A. Jesus desired to be delivered from the suffering of the cross.
   B. Yet He prayed that God's will would be done, not His own. (Mark 14:32-42).
      1. Keep in mind that He could have called 10,000 angels (Matthew 26:53)!
      2. Instead, He sincerely desired that the Father's will would be accomplished (cf. 1 John 5:14-15).
   C. Jesus loved the Father and the world; thus, He practiced submission.

As He prayed there alone in such deep agony,
It was a most beautiful prayer;
Just to think His great heart was all broken for me,
That He my great sorrow must share.

III. A Beautiful Prayer in a Garden of Suffering
- A. The Bible record is clear that Jesus suffered terribly in Gethsemane.
  1. Mark 14:33 – Jesus was "sore amazed" and "very heavy."
  2. Mark 14:34 – "My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death."
- B. Luke, the physician, described this suffering as "an agony" (Luke 22:39-46).
  1. The Greek word *agon* (αγων) refers to a "contest;" a "struggle, fight, or race."
  2. "The root idea is the struggle and pain of the severest athletic contest or conflict. The wrestling of the athlete has its counterpart in the wrestling of the suffering soul of the Savior in the garden" (ISBE).
  3. Thus, the word *agonia* (αγωνια) means, "A struggle for victory; severe mental struggles and emotions; agony, anguish."
- C. Due to this agony, "his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44 ESV).
- D. Jesus endured such suffering so that man could avoid the anguish of Hell (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 2:9).

Chorus:
When the Savior was praying, In the garden of Gethsemane,
He said, "Loving Father, If you will let this cup pass from me;"
I know He was thinking Of the anguish death would bring to His own,
How deep was His sorrow, when Jesus was praying alone.

IV. A Beautiful Prayer in a Garden of Sorrow
- A. The song ends with perhaps the saddest word of all: "alone."
- B. The sorrow of Jesus was amplified by His solitude (Matthew 26:36-43).
  1. Jesus took the disciples with Him to Gethsemane.
     - a. He desired to have them close while He prayed.
     - b. He told them to pray while He also prayed (Luke 22:40).
  2. He took Peter, James, and John to His heart in the heart of the Garden.
  3. Yet He was "withdrawn from them about a stone's cast" (Luke 22:41).
- C. Though He wanted the disciples close to Him, ultimately, He would stand alone before God.
- D. Finally, He was betrayed by one of His own (John 18:1-3; Mat. 26:45-50).

Conclusion: A Beautiful Prayer in a Garden of Salvation (Hebrews 5:7-9)

A. Though Jesus endured sorrow, suffering, and solitude, in the end He was successful.
B. His prayer was heard by the Father (Hebrews 5:7).
C. His example taught His disciples how to endure suffering (Hebrews 5:8).
D. His sacrifice purchased salvation for all who obey (Hebrews 5:9).
E. Through His prayers, Jesus prepared Himself to bear the cross – "to die as the Crucified One."