The Christian Race

Hebrews 12:1—*Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. 4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. 5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*

10*—For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.*

*14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:*

Luke 22:44 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.

Matthew 26:45—*Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 46 Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me*.

1. The Prayer Life of Jesus teaches us to run with patience, It was His custom to seek time alone with God. During the last week of His life, He was spending every night in prayer

Luke 22:39—*And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.* 21:37—*And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives.*

1. Jesus bore the weight of His disciples' great trial. The greatest trial the disciples were to ever know was at hand, and they did not know it. In just a few hours they were going to fall away. They desperately needed to pray that they enter not into temptation. This race you pray patiently, not on the run.

22:40 And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

The disciples were so gripped by temptation and sin that they would be too weak to repent when Jesus arose and confronted them. Jesus knew the enormous temptation that was coming upon these men and He loved and cared for them, so He was bound to feel the pressure of their trial.

 Hebrews 4:15—*For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.* *16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

Ephesians 6:12—*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

2 Peter 3:17—*Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.*

1. Jesus bore the weight of His own cup of suffering. In confronting death Jesus turned to God, crying with *strong cries and tears*

Heb 5:7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;

Luke 22:41—*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 43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. 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.*

Four things are seen in this verse.

1.    Jesus got all alone and *kneeled down* before God. Luke says He withdrew "about a stone's cast" from the three disciples. Note two significant points.

a. He needed to be alone with God

b. He fell on His face—the pressure and weight were unbearable.

Matthew 26:36—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. 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. 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. 45 Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 46 Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

2.    Jesus prayed, "Father *Patēr* It is the address of a child's love and dependency and trust. The child knows that His father will hear and turn to him when he calls "Father." But note also the words, "O my Father." Jesus was broken and weighted down; He had fallen prostrate upon the ground with His face buried in His hands. my Father" (cp. [Matthew 26:39](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Mt+26%3A39)).

3.    Jesus asked God to remove the cup from Him. The human nature and will of Jesus is clearly seen in this experience. He was as much flesh as any man is; therefore, He saked God to choose another way other than the cup, if possible. The experience of being *separated from God* upon the cross was too much to bear.

4.    The divine nature and will of Jesus is also clearly seen in this experience. Note the Lord's words: "Let this cup pass from me: nevertheless...." The first act, the first impulse and struggle of His will, had come from His flesh: to escape the cup of separation from God. But immediately, the second act, the second impulse and struggle of His will, came from His Godly nature: not to do as He willed, but as God willed.

Jesus' surrender to do God's perfect will in the Garden of Gethsemane was critical.

⇒    It was in His surrender that He was made perfect and was able to stand before God as the Ideal, Perfect Man.

⇒    It was in His surrender to be the Ideal, Perfect Man that His righteousness was able to stand for every man.

⇒    It was in His surrender to be the Ideal, Perfect Man that He was able to bear the cup of God's wrath against sin *for every man*.

⇒    It was in His surrender to be the Ideal, Perfect Man that His sacrifice and sufferings were able to stand for every man.

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" ([Hebrews 2:9-10](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Heb+2%3A9-10)).

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" ([Hebrews 5:8-9](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Heb+5%3A8-9)).

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" ([2 Cor. 5:21](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=2Co+5%3A21)).

4. ([22:43-44](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Lk+22%3A43-44)) Jesus Christ, Suffering: Jesus bore the awful weight of intense agony. This is seen in three facts.

1.    God had to send an angel to strengthen Jesus. What did the angel do? We are not told, but certainly the angel would have shared how His death...

•    was an act that glorified and honored God because it was doing exactly what His Father wanted. It was an act of obedience, of love and adoration for God. It was an offering, the perfect offering to God (see note—• [Ephes. 5:2](http://www.crossbooks.com/book.asp?pub=0&book=603&tocpath=GALATIANS-COLOSSIANS%20COMMENTARY\Ephesians\IV.%20THE%20WALK%20OF%20THE%20CHRISTIAN%20BELIEVER,%204:1-6:9\E.%20The%20Believer%20is%20to%20Walk%20Following%20God,%205:1-7\2.%20By%20loving%20as%20Christ%20loved%20(v.2))).

•    was to result in His own glory and honor and exaltation ([Hebrews 12:2](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Heb+12%3A2); [Phil. 2:6-11](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Php+2%3A6-11)).

•    was the only way man could be saved eternally.

Also, the angel probably did some very practical things. We can imagine the angel embracing His Lord, just holding Him ever so tightly, perhaps infusing strength into His being. The scene of our Lord being so weak that He had to be embraced and engulfed in the arms of an angel should break the believer's heart. Perhaps the angel wiped the perspiration and blood and tears off His brow. Whatever the scene, we need to see the awful weight and intensity of our Lord's agony.

2.    He prayed "more earnestly," more intensely. The reason is seen in the Greek words for "being in an agony" (*genomenos en agōnia*[PWS: 88](http://www.crossbooks.com/book.asp?pub=0&book=748&tocpath=A\#88: Agony, Being In An; Being In; In Such)). The Greek (aorist participle) means Jesus experienced a growing agony. The weight upon Him was not only intense, it grew more and more intense. The pressure and sense of suffering became heavier and heavier. The picture is that of His becoming engrossed and embodied in agony. Thus, He prayed more and more earnestly. His prayer grew and increased in intensity even as His agony intensified.

3.    He sweat great drops of blood. The words "great drops" (*thromboi*[PWS: 1784](http://www.crossbooks.com/book.asp?pub=0&book=748&tocpath=G\#1784: Great Drops)) mean thick clots of blood. Apparently Jesus was under so much pressure the capillary veins right under the skin burst and the blood mingled with sweat and poured through the enlarged pores.

5. ([22:45-46](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Lk+22%3A45-46)) Jesus Christ, Suffering: Jesus bore the weight of the disciples' continued weakness. The disciples were weak, so weak in fact that they were of no help to Jesus as He faced the most severe crises of His life. Jesus had to face the cross knowing the terrible weakness of His own men. Note what happened.

1.    Jesus arose from prayer and went to the three who were supposed to be praying with Him. They were asleep. The companionship and spirit of prayer and comfort He had sought were not there. All were asleep. He had been left alone to wrestle with God by Himself.

2.    Jesus warned them of temptation. They had failed to pray for Him, but they must not fail to pray for themselves. Jesus said, "Watch and pray." Both were important. *Watchfulness* sees and *praying* prepares. They must watch in order to see temptation coming, and they must pray in order to be prepared when temptation struck.

3.    Jesus warned of the flesh and its weakness. They were sleeping because of the emotional strain and distress of the evening. As Luke says, they slept because of "sorrow," that is, sadness ([Luke 22:45](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Lk+22%3A45)). The evening had been shocking and taxing. They were weary, fatigued, and preoccupied. Concentration in prayer was difficult. They probably fought to stay awake and to pray for their Lord, but the importance of prayer and of spiritual dependancy upon God in facing trials had not yet been learned. They were making two mistakes common among believers.

a.    They were depending upon their own wisdom and strength instead of God's Spirit to fight whatever battles lay ahead.

b.    They were taking God's deliverance for granted instead of assuring themselves of His deliverance through the testimony of prayer. They believed Christ to be the Messiah; therefore, they believed that God was going to deliver them from the Romans no matter what. As carnal, fleshy men are apt to do, the disciples no doubt thought prayer mattered little. They were just presuming upon God, taking His deliverance for granted. What Jesus said was, "Watch and pray, for only as you watch and pray can you keep from falling when the trial comes."

A point needs to be noted here: watchfulness and prayer bear *testimony* to God. When men watch and pray, they demonstrate that dependency and trust in God are well founded. When God answers the prayers of men, He demonstrates that He loves and delivers those who truly look up to Him. Without watching and praying, God allows the disciples to fall in order to teach that dependency and trust in Him are absolutely essential.

4.    They were failing to stay awake to pray, to watch and be watchful in prayer. Their spirits were not alive and alert enough to overcome the flesh. The drowsiness and slumber of the flesh were stronger than the spirit

 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" ([Matthew 26:41](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Mt+26%3A41)).

Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" ([1 Cor. 10:12](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Co+10%3A12)).

Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving" ([Col. 4:2](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Col+4%3A2)).

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" ([1 Peter 5:8](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Pe+5%3A8)).

 The power of darkness

A state of blindness-calls good evil and evil good

Lays unholy hands on innocence, on Divine Love, to crucify

* Arms for useless strife
  + Wrong thoughts
  + Bad feelings
  + selfish motives

only an hour

Innocence, Love, Truth, faith righteousness, Purity is led away to trial and testings

But the hour of resurection and victory to overcome it all will come for the things of God are Eternal

Joh 5:39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

De 33:27 The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.

Ro 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

2Co 4:18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

2Ti 2:10 Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

1Jo 5:13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.