

Leaders Guide 6: On the Mount of Olives

1. **Suggested Ice breaker:** Outside of meeting Jesus what is most attractive to you about heaven?

2. **Prayer time:**

A Prelude to Prayer : How do these words affect you? The Lord your God in your midst,
The Mighty One, will save;
He will rejoice over you with gladness,
He will quiet *you* with His love,
He will rejoice over you with singing." Zephaniah 3:17

3. **Sharing from the week**

4. **Read Matthew 24 and 25 and be familiar with the background.**

5. **Questions for Discussion:**

- a. When Jesus listed some end time events He said, "All of these are the beginning of birthpains, Matthew 24:8; sometimes translated sorrows. In what way at the signs of Christ's coming like birthpains? _____

- b. If someone says to you that Christians are going to be secretly raptured at a secret coming of Christ, how could you use Matthew 24 to give a different picture of Christ's return? _____

- c. Since no one except the Father knows the time of the second coming of Christ what are two elements in Matthew 24: 42 and 44 that are important? _____

- d. What is the meaning in Matthew 25: 8,9 of not having oil in the lamps? _____

- e. In Matthew 25: 26, Why is the one servant rebuked for hiding his talent? _____

- f. How many talents do you feel God has given you to use in His kingdom? _____
- g. Saint Francis of Assisi has been quoted as saying, "Preach the gospel always and when necessary use words. Expand on the implication of these words to you. ___

- h. In Matthew 25: 31-46, Jesus gives a picture of how His kingdom people should treat the people needing help. There are so many needy people around us, where should we start in helping others? _____

- i. Our western world are the haves and the under-developed countries are the have-nots. About 1 billion people about 15% of the worlds population live on about \$1.00 per day. Hunger and starvation permeates their life. How can the haves help the have-nots best? _____

Background

After a heavy day of teaching (On Tuesday before the crucifixion), Jesus retired to the Mount of Olives with some of His disciples and as the sun was setting He gave them the message about His second return in Matthew 24 and 25. Thank You Jesus for your teaching on this Tuesday which has given lasting help for over 2000 years.

Wednesday—In Retirement—No recorded activities (He is probably at a location on the Mount of Olives or Garden of Gethsemane)

After such a heavy day of teaching and before the challenges He will face on Thursday, I can picture Jesus spending the day in prayer. There are times in our lives when the demands are heavy and a spiritual retreat is needed to give us the power to face the challenges ahead. Today I would like us to look at some Biblical descriptions of the prayer life of Jesus as an encouragement for our prayer today.

“Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.” Mark 1: 35. The night watches in Jewish reckoning were first 6-9 pm; second 9-12 mid-night; third 12-3 am; fourth 3-6 am. Jesus often prayed during the fourth watch. It may be a special time for us—the fourth watch. Of course any time is meaningful for prayer.

“However, the report went around concerning Him all the more: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.” Luke 4: 16

“And when He sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came He was alone there.” Matthew 14:23. This scripture describes how Jesus came to His disciples when they were caught in a storm in the middle of Galilee in the fourth watch of the night.

Jesus not only prayed for Himself but He prayed for His disciples and all followers to this day. Jesus shows His heart in prayer in John 17. This prayer He prayed with His disciples late Thursday afternoon after the Passover supper —He prayed for Himself, His disciples and all believers down through the ages. Here are a few excerpts from that prayer:

“I do not pray that You (The Father) should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”

“And the glory which You gave Me I have given them that they may be one just as We are one.”

When the disciples who were inspired by Jesus prayer life came to Jesus earlier in His ministry and said, “Lord teach us to pray” He gave them the prayer that is incorporated in the sermon on the mount in Matthew 6 which has influenced Christian’s prayer for 2000 years. A powerful prayer life is key to be a powerful witness for Christ.

On tomorrow’s post we will be going to the upper room for the Passover supper, His message to His disciples, Gethsemane, His capture by the mob. Gethsemane will display the most desperate, heartfelt, passionate prayer this world has ever seen. Sometimes desperation brings our heart closest to God as we crave His presence and power.