

The Hour of Gethsemane *has arrived for the World*



Picture Credit: Adam Abram

April 2022

Dear Friends,

The commission and task of our lives today is to pray, for now the hour of Gethsemane has arrived for the world. In Gethsemane Jesus was faced with the destruction of His work and the end of His life. He wrestled with death, the prince of darkness, the greatest power of evil, who tormented Him with the utmost cruelty. What was the significance of this hour in Gethsemane? God accomplished His wonderful purpose in Jesus in this decisive battle. The outcome of the fierce attacks of the enemy was Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane, a prayer which strengthened Him for the approaching horror, for the agony of the crucifixion when He would bear God's punishment for us. Prayer was Jesus' weapon in this hour of darkness. The Gospels record repeatedly, Jesus "knelt down and prayed...Again, for the second time, He went away and prayed...And being in agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down upon the ground" (Matthew 26 & Luke 22).

Now to apply this event to our own lives. The hour of darkness has also come for us when demons encompass us on all sides, trying to seize hold of us. We are being threatened by death. We are living before the time of great catastrophe, the devastation of the earth, before the Antichrist. The hour of Gethsemane has arrived for the world and so we too must heed the command to pray!

That means first of all praying for ourselves, since the increased attacks on us by the powers of darkness far exceed those of the past. Everyone is tempted to yield and let himself be swept along by the trend of lawlessness. The atmosphere is oppressive; darkness and gloom lie in the very air we breathe; all this is intended to arouse fear in us and make us depressed. The demonic powers want us to fall into despair and despondency especially when we see that members of our family have fallen prey to the enemy. We feel weak and powerless before the ever advancing forces of the enemy that always seem to triumph. We can expect no help from another human being. But then Jesus' mighty call reaches our ears.

Pray!

"Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you" (James 4:7f.). Prayer means drawing near to God, coming into contact with Him and bringing Him all our problems, everything that depresses us.

Then the situation will be changed. God deals with our troubles when we bring them to Him in prayer. He takes action. He transforms the depression, discouragement and despair in our hearts, filling them instead with peace, power to endure, comfort and deep joy. In prayer we discover that God is the kindest and most loving Father of all. In these terrible times He embraces us, His children, holding us close to His heart. He strengthens us and by His Spirit imparts to us the courage to suffer as we have seen with the war in Ukraine. But prayer is not an art only acquired by mature Christians. No, as soon as we have come to believe in our Saviour, we can start praying immediately.

Prayer means calling upon the name of Jesus, the Prince of Victory, the Lamb of God. He is the Victor, who defeated Satan at Calvary; the Lamb of God, who destroyed the power of the devil. In these dark times, those powers of darkness seek to oppress us, filling our hearts with despair and unbelief, robbing us of all power, joy and assurance of victory. But whenever we call upon Jesus, our Champion, the powers of darkness are forced to flee. Today, as in no other time we need to pray, that is, to *"battle in faith"* against the powers of darkness!

We can never pray these words enough. They have power whether we pray them silently or aloud. And then the forces of darkness that sought to ensnare us are put to flight. This prayer is our deliverance and refuge in the present age of lawlessness, diabolical deception and false doctrines. If we act upon Jesus' words, praying in this hour of Gethsemane and proclaiming Him Victor, we shall overcome and be comforted and strengthened. We shall experience Jesus' help in every battle and hardship we have to face in these times. When we fix our eyes on Jesus as we pray, we behold the mighty Prince of Victory, who conquered hell and Satan.

Then in the midst of all the suffering and horror of the present age, triumphant joy will take hold of our hearts: Jesus is victorious - soon He will come again as Lord and King.

But even today He is in our midst as Lord and Helper. Prayer alone gave Jesus, the Son of God, the strength to endure that terrible night in Gethsemane. How can we as sinners expect to receive the strength to endure any other way than by prayer, now that the hour of Gethsemane has arrived for the world, and we will be faced with the great world disaster? We hear the threats of nuclear war being made in the news today.

When Jesus prayed in Gethsemane, He prayed a very special prayer - a prayer of tremendous power that silenced Satan - a prayer of deepest adoration. Jesus prayed, *"Yes, Father! Not My will, but Yours, be done!"* This prayer *"Yes Father"*, cost Jesus the deepest agony of soul. It was unconditional surrender to the hardest suffering He had to endure. Just like the picture on the front shows Jesus, prostrate on the ground as He prayed, *"Your will be done!"* In other words Jesus, the Son of God, who possesses all might was saying, *"I commit Myself to Your will, even though I do not understand it, for I trust in You. I dedicate Myself absolutely to Your leadings, even if it means facing the ruin of My lifework, even if it means that My disciples will forsake Me. I surrender Myself even if it means that the prince of death and hell were to kill Me now. Here I am, Lord. Take Me; do with Me as You please."* Through this experience that Jesus has we are reminded of the tremendous power of prayer. Prayer, did not deliver our Lord from suffering, but it did deliver Him through it. So often we pray that God might get us out of adversity, rather than through it. Prayer is one of God's primary provisions for our endurance and perseverance. His words to His disciples apply to us as well: *"Pray that you will not fall into temptation."*

The dark hour of Gethsemane has arrived for the world and now Jesus is challenging us to pray as He did. Peace will enter our hearts only if we pray as He did, for then our will is abiding in the will of God. It is essential that we pray: *"Yes, Lord, Your ways are perfect, I accept them even if it means living in these terrible times. I consent by saying 'Yes, Father!' You have planned everything in my life, and Your will is good. I know that You are leading me to my eternal goal, and along the shortest route. You are my prize and reward, and heaven is my goal where I shall behold You and where suffering will be banished for ever more!"*

"Your ways are perfect! Your judgements are true and just!" Only prayers like these help us to surrender our will ever anew and make us willing to bear the suffering of the present day and age. And when we practice committing our wills in such prayers, the suffering and horror of our times will lose their grip over us. On the other hand, if we do not lead a life of deep intensive prayer now, we shall be lost in these demonic times preceding the great catastrophe. We shall be at the mercy of the horror, the despair, the temptations and the suffering.

When disaster strikes, we can experience help and deliverance only if we lead a life of prayer, forming a deep relationship of love with Jesus and the Father, since prayer changes everything.

Prayer, which is the purpose and commission of our present life, does not only bring comfort and help for ourselves. There is far more to it! When we follow Jesus' challenge to pray, new ways will suddenly open up and many changes will occur. Previously, we may have been resigned to the 'status quo' and assumed an apathetic attitude. *"What is the point in exerting ourselves,"* we ask, *"if nothing could be different?"* But the Lord has given us the weapon of prayer. Now we have the chance of holding back the wrath of God, of resisting the powers of darkness, of saving souls, of experiencing miracles and of mitigating the judgements of God.

For this reason, when we look at what is happening in the world around us, we feel it is impossible to hear the daily news without giving a response, an immediate response of prayer.

In our Sisterhood when we hear of a new calamity or an act of violence, rebellion or anti-Christian laws that are being supported world wide, we say together, *"Lord, have mercy! Christ, have mercy! Lord, forgive us our sins!"*

It is because of the guilt of our human race, because of our own sin and the sins of our nations that God has to judge the world by sending so many catastrophes. We don't have to look far to see these with the war in Ukraine, and the floods in Australia. As members of our nations we are also held responsible for its sins, crimes and lawlessness.

As more and more antichristian laws are introduced that support the killing of unborn human life, sexual depravity, drug addiction, and revolts, we pray together: *"Save souls, Lord! Save souls! Hold back the advance of the powers of darkness!"*

When we are faced with or hear of depravity and destruction in our world, we pray: *"Come soon, Lord Jesus! You will make all things new!"*

We can no longer go through life without giving the response of prayer to the alarming news and all the other distressing news events we see and hear about every day. God is waiting now for our prayers, since He longs to help, to change, to intervene and save. The fervent prayer for more souls to be saved reaches God's heart, especially when we add, *"For Jesus' sake. And for the sake of His sacrifice and the blood He shed."*

Then lost souls will be saved, souls will be snatched out of Satan's clutches. Those who have grown hard and indifferent will come to repentance. There will be a burst of new life. The powers of darkness and destruction will be held back.

Through prayer we can build a dam against the advancing powers of darkness and the invasion of sin. There is real power in calling upon the name of Jesus and in praising His blood. When we proclaim in faith ever anew *"Jesus is Victor!"*, then one day Satan has to yield. But if we do not call upon Jesus, we are giving the devil free rein.

Jesus asks us now as He once asked His disciples long ago, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Rise and pray!"



And when Satan gains ground, countless numbers of people are led astray and fall into his clutches. So by not praying and calling upon the name of Jesus, we become guilty towards others because of our neglect. Whoever leads a life of superficiality and indifference today is not only lost himself, but will also be held responsible for others who are going astray. In these times when terror reigns in the world, and the power of Satan and sin is at its peak, we can still move God's arm as prayer warriors.

Today God is waiting for those who allow themselves to be judged. Having received His judgement and grace, they are now able to keep watch and pray in this late hour before the world disaster strikes. Those who have humbled themselves under God's judgement in everyday life are granted authority when they pray. Because they know what God's judgement entails and can visualise best what it means for all mankind to come under the wrath of God in the hour of judgement, they are consumed with the longing to help save souls. A contrite and broken heart is a further incentive to prayer. Humility and ardour are essential, if we are to go through this time of preliminary judgements properly.

Let us not say that we are too insignificant, incapable of assuming such responsibility, or argue that *"we ourselves are not much better."* God's promises are especially meant for the humble, for the prayer of the humble pierces the clouds and reaches the heart of God.

Nor let us say we have no time. How many minutes and hours make up a single day? There are many opportunities to find countless chances to send up short prayers over and over again - but do we do it? Or do we miss these opportunities?

This last dark stretch of the preliminary judgements, preceding the world disaster calls for an all-out effort. We must help save those who are willing to be saved, by devoting ourselves to prayer, personal witnessing and evangelistic outreach. That is our supreme commission and most urgent task. What a tremendous privilege and blessing to be enrolled in the Lord's service, to share His concerns, to help Him save and rescue souls!

Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus,

I thank You for undergoing such a terrible night of temptation and for grappling with the powers of hell in a combat that cost You tears and sweat of blood. I thank You for suffering this Agony out of love for us. I thank You for overcoming in temptation by saying, "Yes, Father". Lord, I worship You for humbling Yourself beneath the will of God when You were in utter darkness and probably no longer able to understand the Father.

As I reflect on the agony you suffered at Gethsemane, accept my life as a token of my gratitude for Your immeasurable suffering, accept my dedication to say "Yes, Father" at all times. I want to humble myself under the mighty hand of God when He chastens me. When I no longer understand Him, I want to trust in His fatherly love. In this way let me overcome in my trials and temptations. Grant that I may one day be crowned as victor to Your joy and be a reward for Your Agony in Gethsemane, having resisted the adversary and sin to the point of bloodshed as a true follower of Yours. Amen

The Way to Victory in Temptation is:

- to trust in God's love, even when we do not understand Him.
- to submit humbly to God's incomprehensible leadings.
- to acknowledge that God's thoughts are higher than ours.
- not to seek to understand God with our fallen intellect.
- to honour God's commandments and His holy will.
- to obey God absolutely, seeking nothing but His will.
- to cling to His promises.
- to hope against hope & to be steadfast in faith to the end.
- to be able to wait for God to act, since His timing is always perfect.
- to believe that God's plans are always marvellous.
- to trust implicitly that God is Love and only has the very best intentions for His child.
- to remember that temptation brings forth glory.

Gethsemane

Gethsemane! Who hears His pleading,
His fearful crying and entreating?
The Son of God in anguished fear
With none to solace Him is here.
He is alone, forsaken.

Gethsemane! Who notes His yearning,
Who sees Him to His friends now turning,
That He may all His grief impart,
And they may cheer, console His heart?
Alas! His friends are sleeping.

Gethsemane! Who sees Him wrestling,
With evil pow'rs around Him pressing,
Tormenting Him with all their might?
And in His soul He sees no light,
By God and man forsaken!

Gethsemane! Where Christ so suffered,
My praise a thousandfold be offered.
For me Christ all this pain endured,
Freedom from death and hell secured.
How can I ever thank Him!

*For all your prayers, friendship and support
we send you our heartfelt thanks and we pray,
may each one of you be blessed abundantly!*

The Evangelical Sisters of Mary



Most of this Newsletter has been taken directly from M. Basilea's original
"Countdown to World Disaster - reprint 1976"

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