

Day Twenty-Seven

And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground. -Luke 22:44

Prayer in Times of Anguish, Agony and Sorrow

There are few times in our life that can compare to that of complete and utter agony of heart. Maybe you have been there. Perhaps you are all too familiar with that darkness that permeates to the very soul. You too may have experienced sweat drops of blood, as it were, in your plight. It is there in the crucible we find where our faith lies.

Our verse today is from the incident on the night of Jesus' betrayal in the Garden. The overwhelming tide of emotions in anticipation of what He must soon endure bring Jesus to His knees for help from His heavenly Father. He was all alone. Isaiah had prophesied this. *He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. -Isaiah 53:3-4.* Jesus knew what awaited Him. He also knew the source of solace and help to help Him through His hour of need. The writer of Hebrews confirms this account of Christ in the Garden. *In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. -Hebrews 5:7*

There is little that can compare to that of feeling of being alone, with no one to help us. It is at the end of our rope that we find when all else has abandoned us that our Heavenly Father is waiting for us when we have no hope.

What has brought us to this intersection of hopelessness and despair? Is it financial ruin? Is it divorce? Is it the loss of a loved one? Is it failure? Is it a sin in your life that has overcome you? Whether it is internal or external in nature, agony is a tremendous weight to bear. The word in Greek is 'agonia', and properly depicts "the struggles for victory in gymnastics or wrestling or severe mental

struggles or emotions, agony or anguish". That hits the nail on the head exactly. Anguish, agony, severe mental struggles. Who can bear such things? Jesus told His disciples as they entered the Garden with Him, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me." - Matthew 26:38

Paul told the Church at Corinth to forgive the offending brother or he might be overcome by excessive sorrow. It may be that sorrow because of sin has engulfed us and is in danger of overwhelming us. It is imperative that we take our sorrow to the only source that can rid us of this sorrow. It is to God alone we must fly for comfort.

Yet, we may have sorrow from circumstances not unlike what Paul referred to in Philippians 2:27 when he spoke of the illness that nearly took the life of Epaphroditus. We will almost certainly share this type of sorrow in our lifetime when we lose a dear loved one in death.

Our lives will indeed be acquainted with anguish, agony and sorrow at some point. It is at those times that we shall be wise to take our pain to the Father in prayer. For those who spend much time in prayer, they will know the solace and comfort that can be found there. Who else but God can bear our burdens? Who else but the Great High Priest can sympathize with us? *For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need. -Hebrews 4:15-16*

We are assured that we shall find peace in prayer. *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. -Philippians 4:6-7*

Prayerful Thoughts: Our Father, comfort us in our time of distress as only You can do.