

## **Sermon: Agony in Gethsemane**

**Reading:** Mark 14: 32-52

### **Introduction.**

Judas has now left the room. He has shared in the breaking of bread with Jesus and the eleven and allowed Jesus to wash his feet, knowing he was planning to betray him.

Jesus knew what was in Judas' heart and tells him to go and do what he has planned to do. With this Judas leaves. The disciples are clueless about the traitor in their midst and assume Judas has gone to buy provisions for the festival or give money to the poor. (Judas was the treasurer).

Jesus, now alone with his closest and true friends shares his heart with them. No matter what you see tomorrow, know this is to fulfil all that is written in the Scriptures and the purpose for which I was sent. Through these events you witness, know that my Father will be glorified as will the Son be glorified. There is something greater happening here than you will first see. The disciples are bemused and looking confused and clueless. After they had shared their final meal together, they leave to enter the garden.

As I read about all the events of maundy Thursday I couldn't help but contrast the two gardens mentioned in the Scriptures. Eden and Gethsemene. How these two beautiful places are in stark contrast to each other and yet inextricably linked.

### **Reflections from the gardens**

The first Garden Eden, was created as a paradise for Adam and Eve and the place of meeting with God during the cool of the evening breeze.

We get a sense of God delighting in his creation as do we. To see the colours of a sun rise on a brand new day. Listening to the birds singing and the sweet fragrances carried on the spring breeze of the flora and fauna, new life springing up all around. All is living within its naturally created rhythm and at peace. Up to this point we have the picture of a wonderful paradise and God said, "It is very good".

### **Restless Mankind**

But mankind is restless in heart, easily deceived and as a result paradise was lost. God cursed the Serpent for deceiving Eve. He cursed the ground which would now become toilsome for Adam to work. Adam's rebellion caused the fall. His job was to protect Eve and to keep God's commandment and yet he let Eve fall into temptation and so Adam's rebellion brought sin and death into creation. Paradise was lost.

Eden, will forever be known as the location of the fall of mankind. Every disease, illness, evil act, oppression, persecution, war, famine, pestilence and plagues that interrupts life and brings about misery and death can all be traced back to this point in history when sin and death corrupted the world as the curse was pronounced in the garden.

However as God pronounced the curses for Adam's rebellion, He also promised from the woman, a seed would come one who would crush the Serpent's head. A Saviour and as we know, a saviour of a virgin birth. A last Adam who would redeem mankind from the curse of sin and death hold over creation brought about by the first Adam.

From Eden to Gethsemane we now travel. On this Thursday traditionally known as Maundy Thursday we discover Jesus has taken his disciples into the garden which has become known as the garden of Tears.

### **Garden of Tears**

Notice again, just as in Eden, it's the cool of the evening breeze in the garden. Events have been set in motion which are about to change the world, divide opinion and history. Jesus, the Word made flesh, the incarnate One, walking through the garden conversing with his closest friends, knowing all that must soon take place in order to undo the curse cast upon mankind from the failure of the first Adam. Jesus our last Adam knows there is no other way to break the curse and free mankind from the judgment and penalty of sin unless He becomes sin for us and pays the price, taking the punishment upon himself.

Jesus the Son of God, sold, betrayed by a friend for 30 pieces of silver.

### **Garden of Blood and Tears**

Jesus words from the garden are very revealing, knowing all that he must endure to reconcile fallen mankind back to himself.

“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.  
**(Mark 14:34)**

It was the doctor St. Luke who records the sweat upon Jesus brow had become “like great drops of blood falling to the ground”.

**(Luke 22:44)**

The medical condition is called Hermatidrosis. It occurs when one's sweat contains blood as the blood vessels constrict and rupture and enter the sweat glands - Its cause, extreme anguish.

### **So what caused Jesus so much anguish?**

Was it the betrayal of a friend in a kiss?

Was the thought of being abandoned by his disciples who promised to stand by him?

Was it the thought of the false accusations against him leading to the death sentence?

Was it the humiliation, the flogging and the cross which distressed him so?

Jesus knew what lay ahead. The scriptures foretold it, written long ago. The book of Isaiah, chapter 53 and Psalm 22 describe in graphic detail all what Jesus would face following his arrest in the garden.

The beating

The flogging to the point of death

The pounding of metal spikes into his flesh

Those who gambled for his clothes as he is lifted up

Jesus did not fear the cross or its shame. The shadow of the cross lay across his manger from his birth and even from the beginning of creation, the Son knew what lay ahead.

“God made him who had no sin to be the sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God”  
**(2 Corinthians 5:21)**

He was being made a curse for us  
Bearing our sins and griefs  
Carrying our sorrows and shame

### New Covenant

And by the breaking of his body and blood poured out he was making a new Covenant for those who believe and trust in Him, that they may know the great price of their sins has now been paid.

For the one who knew no sin, was now carrying the weight of the world upon his shoulders and the greatest pain of all was in carrying the sin, mine and yours, He was cut off from His Father for the first time.

The words of pain and anguish on the cross in which long prophecies in the Psalms...

"My God, my God why has thou forsaken me, why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish.  
(Psalm 22:1).

### **Jesus knew all of this in the first Garden!**

### **Leaving the Second Garden**

All who entered the garden that night would leave very differently.

Peter leaves with blood on his hands after cutting the priests servant Malcheus ear off  
James and John the sons of thunder, desert Jesus running from the garden  
Mark flees naked as the soldiers grabbed him and were left holding his cloak  
Jesus left surrounded by the angry crowd with clubs.  
He is arrested bound with ropes and led away into the night to face the mock trial.

And so we leave the Garden of Tears into the darkest hours of the night which would seal the fate of Jesus.

### **Summary**

We may not understand the mystery of the imputation where my sins were cast upon Him and His righteousness accredited to my account with the world Paid in FULL. But I know the assurance of my sins forgiven.

A new start and a clean slate. Oh the joy of what Jesus has done, Praise and glory to Jesus who did not scorn the shame that lay before Him but looked forward to the glory that would be accomplished and the bride's heart and hand He would win. Jesus made a way through the wall that divided mankind from God by becoming the Door in which we can pass through in repentance and faith into the presence of Almighty God.

We read as Jesus died on the cross that the curtain in the Temple was rent from top to bottom - the way to God now made open. May we endeavour to be thankful each time we receive the broken bread and cup of Christ remembering all he has done for us as we partake in Holy Communion.

Paradise in garden of Eden was lost,  
The curse led to the Garden of Tears, anguishing at the cost  
God created, God promised, God has redeemed, God will restore

**Amen.**