

Watch and Pray

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Read Mark 14:32-42
- B. In Gethsemane Jesus told his closest friends to "watch and pray".
- C. The purpose was so that they would not fall into temptation.
- D. Several questions occur:
 - 1. what does it mean to watch?
 - 2. What were they to be praying for?
 - 3. How would these things have helped them against the temptation?
 - 4. What temptation?
 - 5. Can this help us today?
- E. This evening I'd like us to give some thought to this wisdom from Jesus as it effected the lives of the apostles and as it effects ours today

II. WHY SHOULD THEY "WATCH AND PRAY"?

- A. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.
 - 1. No matter how strong you think you are!
 - a) Illus. — teens and absolute confidence that they'll "never do that!" — and then they do
 - b) The flesh is strong
 - 2. We may have tons of good intentions and desire to do right,
 - a) but all those good intentions and desires...
 - b) ...can be quickly flushed away by the power of the flesh.
 - 3. It causes the sincere Christian to ask, what can we do against the power of the flesh against our good intentions?
- B. Jesus answers, "watch and pray"

III. SINCE THIS IS THE REALITY, WHAT DID JESUS ADVISE THE APOSTLES TO DO?

- A. Watch.
 - 1. The Greek word *gregareo* means
 - a) to pray to pay attention,
 - b) be watchful,
 - c) be vigilant,
 - d) not lose sight of.
 - 2. So, what was Jesus really telling the apostles to do? To be watchful about?

- a) I wonder if they thought “Watch for what?” OR “How will watching help me spiritually?”
 - b) They of course, fell asleep three times on him; but what would they have seen, if they had stayed awake and watchful?
 - (1) Likely, they would have seen the approaching soldiers coming, since Gethsemane faces Jerusalem over the Kidron valley, especially on a moonlit night and carrying torches.
 - (2) Would this have prepared them to better deal with the arrest?
 - (3) Would this have prevented Peter from his rash assault on the servant of a high priest?
 - (4) Or the apostles’ abandonment. This was a far cry from what they had vowed only hours before.
 - c) This was great wisdom from the Lord, and we can only imagine how differently things might have been for them, if they had done what He asked
3. This can apply to us today, too.
- a) While we cannot clearly see the future, we all know the kinds of temptations that we face and which ones are especially alluring to us.
 - b) The problem of falling victim to them might be that **we are not watching**, that is, anticipating those temptations.
 - c) But what if we did?
 - (1) What if anticipating them, we consulted the Lord about what to do.
 - (2) That is, ask the Scriptures in command wisdom and perhaps example?
 - (3) What if we made a course of action for ourselves about how to avoid them
 - d) And we certainly could apply watch to the alertness we are called on to have for Christ second coming — Matthew 25:1ff (5 foolish virgins)
 - (1) Such watching perseveres and doesn't cave-in to weariness like the apostles or worldliness;
 - (2) How fortified would you be, if you thought that Jesus was actually coming tonight?
 - (3) ...because, you know, Jesus could come back at any time.

B. And pray.

- 1. Prayer brings us into prayer brings us in our hearts into the presence of God,
 - a) making his continual presence more real to us
 - b) and fortifying us against temptation.
- 2. Again, had the apostles prayed as Jesus urged them to do,
 - a) they would likely have responded differently to the challenges they faced at the arrest
 - b) at the trial
 - c) at the cross
- 3. Moreover, prayer is where we can ask for
 - a) **strength** to overcome to resist
 - b) and **remembrance** to know His will
 - c) and wisdom to know **how** do his will.

IV. Conclusion

- A. In the moment of the apostles' greatest challenge up to that moment, Jesus told them "Keep watching and praying, that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."
 - 1. The apostles, of course, faced much more challenging moments in their lives afterward
 - a) All martyred except John
 - b) I bet they never forgot this nugget of wisdom from Jesus
 - (1) I bet they remembered all too painfully how true it was that the spirit may be willing, but the flesh is weak
 - (2) I bet they learned how to stay spiritually focused and not let weariness or complacency cause them to fall spiritually asleep again — continually watched
 - (3) I bet they spent lots more time in prayer
 - 2. And there's special spiritual wisdom here for us today
- B. Are you spiritually awake or asleep?
 - 1. Are you thinking that you're spiritually strong enough?
 - 2. Are you living your life like the Lord is coming tomorrow OR like the Lord's going to be quite a while in His return?
 - 3. Are you staying vigilant in prayer looking for strength and the wherewithal for the challenges of the day?