



## ENCOUNTER

Crossing Gethsemane

Jodi Hickerson

April 2, 2017

Discussion Notes

The Crossing Church

Las Vegas, Nevada

## OPENING

We are making a transition on our journey through the Gospel of Mark. While the first half of Mark centers on Identity - Who Jesus Is, the second half is about His Purpose. Jesus' ultimate purpose is to give His life on the cross. We are getting up close and personal with the life of Christ on this path that has the potential to change our lives. God is offering us hope, change and life. Remember, the closer we get to Him, the more our lives will change.

## SCRIPTURE<sup>1</sup>

**Mark 14:32-39** They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch." Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The Spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

**Isaiah 53:4-5** Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins! But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed.

**Isaiah 57:15** The Holy One says this: "I live in the high and holy place with those whose spirits are contrite and humble. I restore the crushed spirit of the humble and revive the courage of those with repentant hearts."

**Romans 8:28** And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

**James 1:2-4** Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don't try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way.

**Psalms 34:18** The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.

**2 Corinthians 4:8-9** We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.

**2 Corinthians 12:9** My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in your weakness.

**Lamentations 3:22-24** Because of the Lord's great love, we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

## OBSERVATION

Jesus is facing a horrific death. He is in Gethsemane with His disciples and asks them to wait for Him while He prays. Jesus' anguish is heart-rending and He doesn't hide it from us. Even though He has known throughout His life that His purpose was to be scourged, humiliated, and ultimately hung on a cross, now the time is near. Jesus knows exactly what the next hours will bring, including separation from His Father as the weight of the world's sin came crashing down upon Him. Where does He go for comfort? To His Father, of course. He prays passionately to God for relief, yet humbly relents and turns over His fate to

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<sup>1</sup> All scripture is NIV unless otherwise noted.



His Father. He also turns to His disciples for comfort, but they are asleep and let Him down in His hour of need. But God is there: comforting, sustaining, and loving Him.

**Question:** As we read about Jesus' need for the presence and support of His disciples during His great trial, what will be your response to others who are suffering? Will you be awake?

**Question:** When you read about Christ's passion as His death becomes imminent, how does it touch your heart? What emotions are you feeling?

## APPLICATION

Jesus asked that He could avoid His fate, but even God's Son was not spared His heart crushing situation because God's love for us was paramount. When we face our Gethsemane moment, we can look back at Jesus and His response as our example. God asks us to humbly submit to His will.

**Question:** When God asks you to respond to Him with humility how do you demonstrate that to others? Jesus' experience is the same for us. When life crushes us, God asks that we humbly come to Him, able to accept His will. We know that "ALL things work together for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." And what is His purpose? If we have a global perspective, one that goes far beyond our own imminent circumstance, we know that God's heart yearns for all humanity to accept His Son's gift of forgiveness of sin and receive eternal life with Him.

**Question:** Tell us about a time when you had a crushed heart. What were your thoughts and how did you share your pain with God?

**Question:** Did your friends rally around you during your circumstance? How did you feel about the ones who didn't?

We don't always understand what God is doing when we suffer. It is our faith that tells us to simply trust Him and go through the circumstance because we know He is walking through it with us. Jesus said, "If you love me you will obey what I command (John 14:15)." Jesus showed us what that looks like as He went through His ordeal.

**Question:** Where are you on the scale of obedience? If you aren't happy with how you measure up, what are you willing to do about it?

When we observe others going through difficult times, we wish we could relieve their suffering. We put ourselves in their place with empathy, and want to take away their pain. We often don't understand why it is happening and question God. We pray for relief and sometimes we don't see the result for which we prayed. When Officer Henry Prendes was killed responding to a domestic violence police call, his family was shattered by his loss. But God lifted them up and walked with them through their grief. Our people prayed and we grieved with them. The family's faith and trust in God were inspirational for all of us and we know God honored the way they witnessed their love for Him through their crushed hearts.

**Question:** How do you respond to God when your prayers aren't answered as you wished?

**Question:** Tell us about a time when you witnessed the suffering of someone else and stepped alongside them to help? What did you do?

**Remember, there will be joy in the morning!**

## PRAYER

Heavenly Father, despite what happens **TO ME**, I am open to what You want to do **IN ME**. When my circumstance is crushing my heart, I am confident that You are beside me, sustaining, comforting and loving me. We seek You desperately in our anguish and know that, even if our prayers aren't answered as we would wish, we will grow closer to You through the experience. In Jesus' name. Amen.