

The Anguish of Gethsemane | Emptied #2

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Christians experience hard times. One of the great lies that has been spread in the Christian world is that if you are a Christian, God won't let you suffer. Or, if you are an obedient Christian you can expect a life of wealth and good health. The Bible gives us a startling contrast to this picture. God's people suffer. We see this most powerfully in the suffering of Jesus as he made his way to the cross. In the garden of Gethsemane we get a glimpse of the tremendous personal anguish that Jesus experienced before his sacrificial death.

Jesus experienced great emotional distress

Before his arrest, Jesus went to Gethsemane to pray. In this moment, we see the great emotional stress that Jesus was under.

Matthew 26:37-38 *He took Peter and Zebedee's two sons, James and John, and he became anguished and distressed. He told them, "My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."*

This is a startling picture of Jesus. Jesus is emotionally overwhelmed. He feels a crushing anguish, and he expresses that to his friends and God the Father. This is an important lesson for us. Many Christians feel like depression and anguish are sinful emotions for the Christian. Jesus, however, shows us that good Christians deal with these feelings and can bring them to God.

[\[Related: Does God Have Emotions?\]](#)

Jesus wanted to avoid the cross

Did you know that Jesus didn't want to go to the cross?

Matthew 26:39 *He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying, "My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."*

Jesus prayed three times to avoid the cross. He certainly experienced anxiety over his coming torture and gruesome death. However, he also understood the greater agony he would experience in bearing the sins of the world. For the first time, Jesus would experience the shame of sin as he bore our sins. Jesus understood that this was the only way to secure the salvation of the world. He must experience the cup of God's wrath (see [Isaiah 51:17](#)). And on the cross, Jesus would experience separation from the Father.

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

Although Jesus asked three times to avoid the cross, each time he submitted to the Father's will. This shows us how a mature Christian is one who is submitted to God's will for our lives even when it is not what we would will for

ourselves.

Jesus went to the cross for you

After Jesus' time of prayer, he knew it was time to be arrested. Indeed, Judas betrayed him and brought soldiers to arrest him. For an onlooker, this looked like the end, evil had triumphed over Jesus.

Matthew 26:45-46 *But look—the time has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Up, let's be going. Look, my betrayer is here!*

However, evil had not won. Jesus was going willingly to the cross. This was God the Father's plan all along. Jesus chose to give up his life ([John 10:18](#)). And Jesus did this for you. He suffered to save you from your sins. And God the Father suffered also. The Father allowed his Son to go to the cross. God loved the world so much that he refused to answer the prayer of his Son.

Discussion Questions:

1. Watch the video together or invite someone to summarize the topic.
2. What is your initial reaction to this video? Do you disagree with any of it? What jumped out at you?
3. What is the greatest sacrifice that someone made for you (other than Jesus)? Why was this sacrifice so great?
4. Read [Matthew 26:37-38](#). How would you describe Jesus' emotions in the garden of Gethsemane? Does it surprise you that Jesus expresses these emotions? Why or why not?
5. What do you do when you experience feelings of depression, anxiety, and sorrow?
6. Read [Matthew 26:39](#). How does it make you feel to know that Jesus asked three times to avoid the cross?
7. Describe the spiritual agony that Jesus was going to experience on the cross.
8. Why was Jesus' sacrifice on the cross necessary?
9. Read [2 Corinthians 5:21](#). Explain the meaning of this verse and what it means specifically for you.
10. Why did God the Father refuse to let Jesus avoid the cross?
11. Write a personal action step based on this conversation.