

Explore the Bible: May 2

Willing • Luke 22:41-53

By Laura Lee Leathers



Leathers

We are in a spiritual battle! It's the battle of the wills and who is really in control of our lives. It is God, me, or someone else?

Regardless of age, we all have a sinful nature. Rather than surrendering, being submissive, and eager to follow biblical precepts and God's will, we are opposed, reluctant, and unyielding. Rather than being willing, we are often unwilling, revealing a lack of trust and faith in God.

Jesus is our example, and He willingly submitted to the Father's redemptive plan; "we observe Jesus' love... and marvel at His love for us." (LifeWay).

It's late Thursday evening, and Jesus has completed His final teaching with the disciples. Judas, filled with Satan (vv. 3, 35-37; John 13:2, 27), has departed to tell the chief priests and scribes (John 13:30).

Jesus and the remaining eleven disciples depart to the Mount of Olives (the Garden of Gethsemane), His customary place. There, Jesus instructs the disciples to, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation (ESV)."

In Prayer (Luke 22:41-46). Jesus leaves them and walks

farther, about a stone's throw. He kneels and prays, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done (v. 42)."

It was customary for first-century Jews to stand when praying. To kneel is associated with the fervency of the prayer (see 1 Kings 8:54; Acts 7:60; 9:40). Jesus is about to face His most significant challenge – unprecedented suffering – and prayer was his number one priority.

Saying, "If you are willing," is about recognizing the sovereignty of God, who evaluates and determines the answer to every request. Our desire is to submit to an all-wise, loving God who works everything out for His purposes and glory.

The cup represents the suffering and crucifixion He will be facing. The Lifeway commentary gives three reasons as to why Jesus asked for the cup to be removed:

– "First, the deep emotion expressed in the request emphasized the intense suffering Jesus anticipated... It involved His taking the wrath of God for all human sin upon Himself on the cross."

– "A second possible motive behind Jesus' prayer was to demonstrate His sinlessness... The test of faith is always whether we will follow our will or God's will."

– "A third possible reason for this request by Jesus was to demonstrate there was no other way other than God's plan to provide for our salvation."

It was the Father's will and knowing the need of His Son that God sent an angel to strengthen Him (see Matt. 4:11; Mark 1:13). Jesus, being in anguish, prayed more fervently. This time, drops of blood fall to the ground (only Dr. Luke reports this detail). There are several interpretations regarding verse 44. However, the takeaway is that Jesus felt physical agony.

Jesus arose and returned to the disciples. He “found them sleeping for sorrow.” He tells them again to pray so they do not enter into temptation. In the next few hours and the following days, they would face temptations.

In Betrayal (Luke 22:47-50). While Jesus was still speaking, Judas led the heavily armed procession of the Sanhedrin and Roman soldiers. He betrayed Jesus with a prearranged signal: a kiss.

Jesus stated to Judas, “Would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?” Judas had been a part of the disciples for three years, had been taught many spiritual truths, saw Jesus perform miracles, and participated in The Lord’s Supper. He was a disciple, but he didn’t truly believe in Jesus as his Lord and Savior. From Matthew 27:3-5, we learn of his deep remorse regarding the actions that led to him taking his life.

Peter was ready to defend Jesus, and in a commanding tone of voice he asked if the time had come to strike with the sword (v. 49). He pulled a dagger and cuts off the right ear of the servant, Malchus (John 18:10).

In Action (Luke 22:51-53). Jesus took control of the situation. He miraculously restored the ear. Then, Jesus asked the chief priests and others why all of this was necessary since they could have seized Him in the temple. “But this is your hour, and the power of darkness (v. 53b).”

Submitting Himself once again to His Father’s redemption plan, Jesus willingly moved forward and was arrested in the darkness of the night. Within hours, the spiritual realm of the dominion of darkness would be overcome by Jesus, the Light of the World, who offers forgiveness and eternal life.

“Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit” (Psalm 51:12).

Leathers is a member of First Church, Lexington.