

Come Follow Me
Elo Viz production
Week 25
Luke 22, John 18

And just like that we are down to the last few days of the Savior's mortal ministry. As the last supper concludes Jesus heads straight into the Garden of Gethsemane. That is what we are going to be focusing on today. But, before we get to this all important culminating event let's take a look at what is actually happening. I believe that to truly understand the Atonement and the suffering of the Christ for us, we must understand the events that brought this event into this moment.

Luke 22 states:

“39 ¶ And he came out, and went, as he was **went**, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.” (verse 39)

Luke is the only one that calls this place the mount of Olives. Matthew and Mark call it “Gethsemane”. This word in Hebrew means “Oil press”. We know that this was an olive grove just outside of the city and there was a very steep hill that you would have to climb in order to get to the garden after you cross the brook of Cedron. And in this garden was an olive press which consisted of 2 very large stones that would crush the olive and produce the most valuable part of the olive which is the oil. They would use the oil for all sorts of things. Fuel for their lamps, anointing or healing, cooking and even perfume. It is not a coincidence that this event took place in this Garden of suffering.

And just as a side note, Bruce R McConkie talked about the three gardens of God. Talking about the Garden of Eden, the Garden of Gethsemane and the Garden of the empty tomb. Each of these events had a significant contribution to our Eternal salvation and they all took place in a garden.

https://emp.byui.edu/ANDERSONR/itc/Teachings/chapter11/The_Purifying_Power_of_Gethsemane.htm

<https://latterdaysoprano.com/2008/09/16/the-three-gardens-of-god/>

Isaiah's mighty vision foretold of this event stating:

“4 ¶ Surely he hath **borne** our **griefs**, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he *was* **wounded** for our **transgressions**, *he was* bruised [literally crushed] for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his **stripes** we are **healed**.

6 All we like **sheep** have gone **astray**; we have turned every one to his **own** way; and the LORD hath laid on him the **iniquity** of us all.

7 He was **oppressed**, and he was **afflicted**, yet he **opened** not his mouth: he is brought as a **lamb** to the **slaughter**, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb [or silent], so he openeth not his mouth. (Isaiah 53:4-7)

This garden was foretold to be the place where Jesus Christ, the Son of God would take upon Him the sins of the entire world. I hope we can take a moment this week and really consider what this means. If we were to take upon ourselves our own sin and suffer the wrath of God for just our own transgressions do you think you would survive? Could you take it? The pain, the sorrow, the agony, the crushing weight. Can you really imagine what that would be like? I don't think we have the slightest clue. It is no wonder that He took His disciples with Him and asked them to wait and watch and pray.

His specific instructions were to "Pray that ye enter not into temptation." (Luke 22:40) It is interesting that Luke is the only one that records that. And I'm glad that he did. That phrase has meant a great deal to me in my life. I recall times when I was younger when I thought that temptations were a little fun, thrilling, even exciting. I could get right up to the edge and not go over. And, yes if you are wondering I was a bit of a dare devil in my youth. Where I grew up in Washington state there were tons of black berry bushing that would grow wide like weeds and when we cleared our land we would make these huge piles of vines and thorns to make a dirt bike jumps right through the middle of them. Even as I got older, though the thrill of danger less-nd for me, the confidence in my ability to take on the adversary on my own still lingered and on many occasions I found temptations drawing me in and I thought "it's no big deal" I'll just look over the edge, taste just a little, I could walk away at any time. But now, with a little more wisdom and the gray hair to prove it; I know that the words of Jesus Christ to pray that ye enter not into temptations have a lot of weight and a lot of truth. Every turn we make away from God, even if it is only briefly, has a profound effect on our lives. And it is a two fold effect. First the spirit will withdraw and we are on our own if we choose to actively pursue sin. And second that singular sin and the pain and suffering that comes with it had a crushing effect and tremendous agony that had to be borne by our Brother and Savior, Jesus Christ. And though to us He was only in the Garden for a couple of hours. I think it is important to realize that God's time is not like ours on earth. God is all knowing, all powerful and all encompassing. He can be past, present and future all at once. He doesn't have a watch that just keeps ticking away. As Jesus stepped into that Garden, completely aware of what was about to take place. Matthew tells us "He fell on His face" and plead with the Father "saying Father (Mark records Abba, or Daddy) "if thou be willing, **remove** this cup from me: nevertheless not my **will**, but thine, be done. (Luke 22:42)

He knew that even the pain of just one sin would cause months or even years of pain. Yes to us He only spent a few hours in that Garden but He could have been there for Centuries in complete agony and suffering as He took upon Himself every single sin for every person that has ever and will ever live on this earth. And not just for sin itself but the lasting effects of sin and sorrow for all its effects. Meaning that when you hurt someone in any capacity He suffered for you so that you could repent and be freed from that suffering and sorrow. And He also suffered

for the person you hurt and the pain that it caused them allowing them to be healed and giving them relief and peace from the effects of your choices. This event was not some casual stroll or a brief prayer for Jesus in a beautiful Garden. The Gospels fall very short in trying to explain in words, the suffering that He went through as He atoned for us. The strongest visual they give is that "His sweat was like great drops of blood falling down to the ground." (Luke 22:44) Thus the reason He was in an olive grove meant that those olives in order to get the value out of each one, had to be crushed, torched, bruised. And though it would be impossible for us to be able to be crushed and suffer for our own sin as He did. He willingly took our place and was crushed for each of us.

So what does this all mean? How is this event that took place over 2 two thousand years ago supposed to help us today as we go about our comfortable lives?

Because some might say: Well, If He already suffered the paid for my sins then it really doesn't matter what I do. I can just do me, and when I die I will give Jesus a big high five as he welcomes me into heaven, and everything will be just fine.

Or some might believe that because Jesus suffered for me, that must mean that I don't have to suffer or feel pain. And when I do feel sorrow, It must be something that I caused myself and isn't covered by His atonement.

If either one of these are considered then we truly do not understand the events that took place in the Garden of Gethsemane.

In order to address these two false notions about these atonement we first understand where God's power comes from. How this whole atonement was able to happen and what effect it really does have on us in our lives.

First: God's power is not centered in him being all knowing. Yes, He does know everything. From the beginning of time to the end of time. He can, and does see every tiny detail of every molecule and atom in existence. The scriptures call it Omniscient:

"**12** For the **word** of God *is quick*, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged **sword**, **piercing** even to the dividing asunder of **soul** and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a **discerner** of the **thoughts** and **intents** of the heart.

13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the **eyes** of him with whom we have to do." (Hebrews 4:12-13)

Which means that there is not anything under heaven that God does not know.

He is also Omnipresent: Which means that He is everywhere and sees all at all times. Jeremiah records:

23 *Am* I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off?

24 Can any **hide** himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I **fill** heaven and earth? saith the LORD. (Jeremiah 23:23-24)

But even this does not identify the source of God's power.

So, What is it? What is it that makes God, God? And what is the source of His Power that allows Him to place all of our transgressions and sorrows upon one perfect sacrificial lamb?

It is His Love. His infinite, eternal, unconditional love for each and every one of His children. And "We **love** him, because he first loved us." (1 John 4:19)

The reason that we don't just do whatever it is that we want is because We love God and all that He has done for us. We realize that our very existence day by day is a grace from God. And with His grace we are willing to lay down our sinful lives and do as He has asked us to do. Be who He asks us to be. This is how we return the Love that He so graciously showed us first. And when we feel pain or sorrow for our sins or for the sins of others, It gives us a better understanding and appreciation for the Atonement that took place in that sacred garden. It is by the grace of God that we are able to feel and experience pain, sorrow and suffering in order that we might have a small glimpse of what Jesus went through for us. And after we have felt those crushing feelings, we are able to again turn them back over to Him who paid the price in full for all of them. We again are able to feel peace because of His sacrifice. With a greater love for Him and for our Eternal Father that layed that weight on Him for us.

And the more we draw closer to Them the more we understand what happened in that very sacred place. We understand more clearly every minute, He spent in agony for us individually. So when you feel those pains, that sorrow, weight, you can know with certainty that you are not alone. That He felt those pains for you and with you. Jesus knows exactly who you are and what you are going through. And because of that, we love Him, and we trust Him in any direction He leads us.

I pray that His suffering might mean something to us. That His time in the garden as he focused on each and everyone of us, bearing the weight of all of our sins. Might we allow that to impact us and how we live our lives every day.

In the sacred name of him who saves. Even Jesus Christ, Amen.