

BAC Small Group Participation Guide

SERMON THEME

Palm Sunday

SERMON TITLE

Overwhelmed With Sorrow

Sermon Summary

We don't have the power to control, but we always have the power to surrender.

Discussion Questions

Setting the Scene:

After eating the Passover meal (the Last Supper) with his disciples, Jesus takes a few of his disciples (Peter, James, and John) to Gethsemane to pray.

Read Matthew 26:36-46

³⁶Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." ³⁷He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

³⁹Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

Discussion Questions

⁴⁰Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. ⁴¹"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." ⁴²He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done." ⁴³When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing. ⁴⁵Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

1. In verse 36, notice Jesus' intentionality in seeking out solitude to spend time with the Father. What are some ways you intentionally set aside time to spend with God? What challenges/obstacles do you face in your prayer life?
2. Verses 37 and 38 describe Jesus as "sorrowful and troubled" and "overwhelmed to the point of death." Knowing that Jesus is fully God, what are your reactions to this?
3. Have you ever had a time when you were overwhelmed with stress and anxiety? How did you respond—did your trial bring you closer to God or drive you away from him?
4. What can we learn from Jesus' prayers in verses 39 and 42?
5. Pastor Hinz said, "God's will is rarely easy, but it is always good." How have you seen this play out in your life? What promises/truths can we cling to during times of trial?
6. The basic beliefs of Moralistic Therapeutic Deism (MTD) are that going to church, being a "good" person, believing in God, and doing nice things for others means a happy and comfortable life. Have you found yourself believing this? Do you know others who believe this? How does MTD fall short of God's truth?
7. In verses 40 and 43, Jesus finds his disciples sleeping. The disciples had their chance to pray for strength but slept through it. Keep in mind that Peter later denies Jesus three times (Matt 26:69–75). What can we learn from this? In what ways do we miss opportunities to express our dependence on God?
8. We only have the illusion of control. Unlike us, Jesus actually could have taken control during his crucifixion, but instead chose surrender. Have you thought about this aspect of the crucifixion? How does this change your views on surrender?
9. What are you trying to control in your life (relationships, health, finances, job, future, etc.) that God wants you to surrender?
10. Pastor Hinz said that surrender isn't just a one-time event; it's a daily choice. What are some practical ways we can surrender daily?