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**Text:** [Mark 14:32-42](#) (NIV)

Republic, April 6, 2025

**Title:** "Gethsemane: What Level of a God follower am I?"

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## Introduction -

Don't you love the fact that the bible has 4 different writers of the gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John)? A gospel is the record of the teachings and life of Jesus while He was on earth. Two of the gospels were written by 2 of the original disciples of Jesus.

*Which two writers were part of the original 12 disciples?* Matthew and John

*So, that leaves which 2 gospel writers who were NOT original disciples?* Mark & Luke

A good way to remember this might be to think of the 1st and 4th gospel books as the ones that were written by an original disciple of Jesus, and the 2nd, and 3rd were not.

*So, where did Luke get his information from for the gospel of Luke?* Scholars believe Luke went around gathering it from the various disciples.

*So, where did Mark get his information from for Mark's gospel?* Scholars believe that Mark was a very close companion of Peter. Therefore, scholars believe Mark's information primarily came from Peter.

It is kind of interesting that, in fact most of Mark's information came mainly from Peter, Peter is known for being rambunctious, a "just jump right in there," a "big event" kind of guy.

*And, guess what?* Scholars point out that Mark's gospel is more "miracle dense" than the other 3 gospels. That term means for the smaller amount of chapters Mark has, 16 chapters, as compared to the other gospels (28, 24, and 21 chapters). Mark has 29 miracle stories in it. The longer gospels have just 1 more miracle story than Mark. So, for the smaller amount of chapters, he wrote a lot about miracles, hence the term "miracle dense." Maybe Peter talked about them a lot to Mark.

This Gethsemane event, that is our first Easter story this year, happened on the night Jesus was betrayed by Judas as he led the soldiers to where Jesus was probably at, so they could arrest Him. So, the Gethsemane story is the last main story of Jesus with His 11 disciples just before He would be arrested, tried, and then crucified.

One last thing before we go into Mark's writing about Gethsemane. **All 4** of the gospel writers wrote about the Gethsemane event. Matthew, Mark, and Luke get into details about the stress and pressure Jesus was feeling. Two of the writers talk about how Jesus separated the disciples into 2 different locations, 8 disciples being the first group, and Peter, James and John being the next closest group to Jesus.

John talks about going from Jerusalem to Gethsemane, but mainly covers the arrest story.

| <a href="#">Matthew 26:36-56;</a>                                       | <a href="#">Mark 14:32-52;</a>          | <a href="#">Luke 22:39-53:</a>  | <a href="#">John 18</a>                                      |
|---|---|---|--|
| Details about the 2 locations disciples were put at while Jesus prayed. | Also 2 locations disciples were placed. | (Luke doesn't have 2 locations. He adds "sweat like blood drops" Plus an Angel comforted Him) | Mainly the arrest (Long prayer was <u>before</u> Gethsemane) |

During this Easter series, this year, I will focus on the Gethsemane event for this first sermon, but I want to go back slightly in time next week to talk about John's record of Jesus' final long prayer that He prayed just before they went to Gethsemane. John does an incredible job of providing the details of Jesus' long prayer that tells us lots of interesting things we can learn from.

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*Let's go into the account of Jesus in Gethsemane, as probably told from Peter to Mark:*

**Mark 14:32-42** (NIV)

<sup>32</sup>**a** *They (Jesus & the disciples) went (from the Last Supper location in Jerusalem) to a place called Gethsemane, ...*

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*Luke says it like this:*

**Luke 22:39** (NIV)

<sup>39</sup> **Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him.**

*John says it this way:*

**John 18:1** (NIV)

<sup>1</sup> When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was an olive grove, and he and his disciples went into it.

First of all, the place they are talking about kind of has 2 names for it - The Mount of Olives, and the Garden of Gethsemane. The Garden, though, is located at the base of the Mt of Olives. So, it is, pretty much, speaking of the same location.

2ndly, the path from the Last Supper location in Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives requires you to go down into the Kidron Valley, then back up to the Mount.

Third, "Jesus, went out as usual" means He went there often, most likely to pray, but possibly also to sit and view the city of Jerusalem. It would be a great thinking and praying location.

*There are 4 symbolisms with Gethsemane:*

**1. Gethsemane means "Press of Oils"** - meaning a press that is used to press the oil out of olives. So, this location has a lot of symbolism in that Jesus is feeling the intense pressure (press) of what He is about to go through.

There are times in our christian lives, that we may feel like we are in a press, so to speak. The pressure of life can, at times, feel very, very strong. Maybe it is something that we do not want to face, but know we have to face. Jesus was at that point. He knew what He had to do - facing the cross, and it becomes clear He doesn't really want to do it. It would require the most extreme circumstances for Him - physical exhaustion, pain, extreme mental abuse, & putting up with LOTS of false accusations. (lies about Him) He would see Himself falsely convicted, and then given the most horrible slow way to die.

We, too, go through times of being falsely accused, and even times where someone exaggerates what we did, or said, to the point it is really lies. This happens most when someone gets angry at another. Satan tries to work in our own lives exactly the way Satan was working in people to convict Jesus of what He never did wrong. There are actually Christians who are so foolish that they allow themselves to be just like the people who falsely accused Jesus. They are frustrated with someone and they make things bigger than they were.

If you pay attention to the things people do, or say, including Christians who haven't grown up yet, people duplicate the crucifixion story every day. It is the same Satan that was behind the false accusations of Jesus as the false accusations of today. **Pay attention for yourself, Jesus' story is relived over & over again in other people's lives.**

*Think about your own lives, or someone you know, have you seen them get falsely accused of things they never did, or never meant to do, or someone distorted what they said or did, to make it look worse than what it was?*

In Jesus' case, we know the rest of the story, of how it all turned out for the best. But, He had to go through a lot physically, and emotionally, before it later turned out for the good. It was exhausting & hurt really bad. But, it also changed the world.

Our pain may be either physical, or emotional, or even mental as well. Like Jesus, we have to remind ourselves that the Father loves us. We are special to Him. And, in the midst of our own presses in life, He is there with us, and there are spiritual lessons we can learn and grow from. We can, at least, see God can make something good out of it. ([Rom 8:28](#))

There is a 2nd symbolism:

- 2. Many call it the Garden of Gethsemane, a beautiful garden among a grove of olive trees.** It represents a refreshing place for Jesus and His disciples to go to.

For us, we too need those refreshing places, or refreshing times when we are facing our own toughest times in life. Occasional comfort in the time of something painful experiences, is crucial to getting through through our own emotional pain.

Many times God will give us times of refreshing, or a place of refuge that we so desperately need at the time. The Garden probably was that place for Jesus.

Our 3rd symbolism, or at least interesting fact about Gethsemane is:

- 3. Gethsemane was a place that overlooked the City of Jerusalem. And we know that Jerusalem was very dear to God ever since God gave it to David many years before.**

We could probably say with some certainty, that as Jesus could see the city of Jerusalem from Gethsemane it would remind Jesus of the great city of God as a symbol of people He would be dying for.

*How many times have you been in a place that overlooked a city, or a place you could see a far distance? Was that a beautiful place to be?*

Gethsemane was like that. It overlooked the city of Jerusalem.

The 4th interesting symbolism of Gethsemane (Mt of Olives area) was that:

- 4. Olive oil was very important in Jesus' day.**

One person described the importance of olive oil like this: It was "incredibly important, serving as a staple food source, a key ingredient for lighting, medicine, & anointing, and a symbol of prosperity and peace."

What Jesus was about to do for all mankind would change their lives if they chose to

follow Him. It would be incredibly important to them. It would be a staple in their life, a key ingredient to bringing light into their lives. It would be a key source of any hope of healing, and it would be the true way of God's financial help, as well as experiencing God's peace.

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*The rest of verse 32 says:*

**Mark 14:32 b (NIV)**

**<sup>32</sup>b ... and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray."**

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Mark made it clear that Jesus was there with "His disciples." Our assumption is, it is the same group of disciples that He just ate the passover meal with. So, with Judas now gone, there must have been 11 of them total, in this story.

He tells his 8 disciples to "**Sit here while I pray.**" **He did NOT say to the 8** "Please pray for me." He just asks them to sit while he prays. I find that interesting, *don't you?*

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**Mark 14:33 a (NIV)**

**<sup>33</sup>a He took Peter, James and John along with him, ...**

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There are 3 James in the New Testament that are talked about more than others. One is this James, the brother of John. Another James is another of the disciples, many times referred to as James, the less." The 3rd main James is talked about more later. That James is the brother of Jesus, and would become a key leader of the Elders in Jerusalem, which were overseers of God's church everywhere.

This James is John's brother. So, Peter, John, and his brother James are brought a little further away from the other 8 disciples.

These 3 had always been His inner circle - the ones He was closest to, and the ones He felt He could open up with the most. They also were the ones He could most rely on.

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*The rest of Verse 33, and then Verse 34 says:*

**Mark 14:33b- 34 (NIV)**

**<sup>33</sup>b ... and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled.**

**<sup>34</sup> "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch."**

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So, we go from verse 33 telling us that Jesus was very distressed and troubled, to verse 34, showing that **He chose to tell only the 3 disciples** about His distress.

The 3 were privileged enough to hear Jesus' feelings, unlike the first 8.

**Jesus said** in verse 34 "**my soul is overwhelmed with sorrow.**" His soul, or in other words what He was feeling, or His thoughts, were very overwhelmed at what He knew He was going to have to go through.

Peter, James, & John needed to appreciate all that Jesus was doing with them. When you are close to someone, you need to be there for them. Your life ends up walking through a lot of the mess that your friend is walking through. That is what it means

to be a true, close, friend.

Jesus had God, the Father, as His closest friend, YET, He also chose to share His distress, his worries, with the people on earth whom He was the closest to - these 3.

When we walk more committed to God, we too, will have the opportunity to hear more from God, more of God's thoughts, more of God's concerns. With that, God will give you more opportunity to hear the thoughts of people. And, because of that it will involve more of knowing the frustrations of people, but, at the same time, more of helping to pray for others, and to try to help them become all that God wants them to be. You will definitely feel more of the frustration that people go through. And, at times, if you are going to help people, you will often have to put your own frustrations with them so you can help others. This is why we have got to get to the point where we are not so easily offended. You cannot be offended and help people at the same time.

The 3 heard Jesus' most inner concerns. Commitment means God will share things with you more because He knows He can trust you more. But, it also means a heavier load on you as you see God's concerns.

Then in the 2nd half of verse 34, He says to only the 3 disciples **"Stay here and keep watch."**

I believe "Watch" means to see in the spiritual realm - to be so connected to God that you start seeing what God wants you to see. You get so in tune with Him that you catch things that most people do not normally catch. We allow God to show us things from a spiritual standpoint. You have to "watch" to see it. If you are not watching, you do not see it. Watching is a spiritual act, and that spiritual act will involve prayer.

Much of the time watching is going to involve having bible time every day. **But, a huge part of the time watching will involve having a quiet time, in order to allow God to speak to us.** But, It is not just a morning time with God, it will also involve talking to God and listening to God all day long. Let Him show you things. This is a whole different level of living for God.

Watching is hearing from God, seeing like God sees in whatever situation we are in, or whatever location that we are at. You are more committed, and as a result, God will show you more.

Ask yourselves this mornng: *"How much of my life involves spiritually watching, and trying to get the Father's view about things?" "Do I create quiet time for God to speak to me?"*

Only God knows the future.

- *What if God wants to warn you about a decision you are making, but you do not allow Him to do so?*
- *What if you are not supposed to buy that item?*
- *What if you are not supposed to go to the store?*
- *What if you are not supposed to leave the house to go do your errands right then?*
- *What if you are not supposed to move away, sell your house, buy a different house, a different car, or get a different job?*

## Everything effects everything.

*Do you try to always spiritually watch? Do you truly act like you want to be one of Christ's most trusted disciples, to be there for God and others whom He wants you to help?*

In Jesus' case, you KNOW Satan was involved. Satan wanted life to be very bad for Jesus. He wanted Jesus destroyed and His disciples to be scattered. He wanted everything Jesus had worked for, to be stopped. There was a spiritual battle going on.

Jesus knew what He was on earth for. He knew what He was about to face, and why it was so important. I do not believe Satan knew the whole picture. I think Satan was just trying to defeat Jesus, and any followers of His, in every way he could.

WATCH .... and .... PRAY. This is our job as a Christian. It will make us more effective for God, and it will help us not make foolish mistakes. Meanwhile the other 8 were still caught up in their own world. They were never asked to watch or pray.

Watching is allowing God to help us see from a spiritual point, as He sees. Ask God to teach you what it means to watch and pray.

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### Mark 14:35 (NIV)

<sup>35</sup> **Going a little farther,** *(away from the 3 disciples)* **he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him.**

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So, we could also say, in the case with His inner core 3 disciples, they would be the closest to where Jesus prayed. Because of that, it would seem they heard the words He prayed better. As best as I can tell, it seems that Jesus prayed out loud a lot of the time when around other people.

Note: It is doubtful that any of the 3 core disciples heard all words Jesus prayed. *Remember, they kept falling asleep?*

### **Here is something we can see in this story. We can see 2 levels of God followers:**

Think about it. Jesus is the one that put the disciples in certain locations. *Why not have all 11 disciples together in one spot, and locate them just a little behind Him? Also, why not ask all 11 disciples to watch, or to pray? Also, why not tell all 11 what you are feeling?*

#### The 2 levels were:

- 1) The farthest level where the group of 8 disciples were. (Matthew, also known as Levi), Philip, Thomas, Andrew (brother of Peter), James (son of Alphaeus, and also known as James the Less), Thaddeus (also known as Jude), Simon the Zealot, and Bartholomew. (also known as Nathaniel)
- 2) The other level, were those closest to where Jesus prayed. (3 of them - **Peter, James, and John**)

Then, I guess we can say we have the level where Jesus Himself was at, very close to the Father, where later 1 angel came to strengthen Him. (according to [Luke 22:43](#))

Question: Why would Jesus separate one group of disciples from the other group? Why is one group farther back, and the other 3 disciples closer to Jesus?

Is it possible that the 8 disciples were on a different level in their walk with God, or a different commitment level, than the other 3 disciples? The 8 could represent probably most Christians today, whereby they haven't committed as much of their life to God. For the 8, Jesus did not even use the word "Watch," nor did He ask them to pray. He just said "Sit here while I pray."

Jesus also did not involve the 8 with helping them see what He was going through. **It was only to Peter, James, and John did He say these words of verse 8:**  
"My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them.  
"Stay here and keep watch."

The 2nd level, represents Christians who truly understand what it means to walk with God. They are fully committed to Jesus. Jesus believes He can trust them with His heart and thoughts. He also wants them to be involved with Watching and Praying.

Even in Matthew's gospel he says the same thing, and keep in mind he was with the 8:  
[Matthew 26:36-37](#) (NIV)

<sup>36</sup> Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "**Sit here while I go over there and pray.**"

<sup>37</sup> He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled.

We have to ask ourselves this morning, "Which place would Jesus have put me in based on my life right now?"

And it would be good to ask ourselves: Which place would I want to be in, now that I see the bigger story?" Just because we are at a certain level now, doesn't mean we have to stay there. Matthew wrote a gospel book later. Philip was involved in great things after Jesus' resurrection. Others of that 8 we never hear much about again.

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[Mark 14:36](#) (NIV)

<sup>36</sup> "**Abba, Father,**" he said, "**everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.**"

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Jesus started His prayer with Abba, Father.

Bible Knowledge Commentary says this about the words "Abba Father:"  
"Abba" was a common way young Jewish children addressed their fathers. It conveyed a sense of family intimacy and familiarity. The Jews, however, did not use it as a personal address to God since such a familiar term was considered inappropriate in prayer. Thus Jesus' use of *Abba* in addressing God was new and unique. He probably used it often in His prayers to express His intimate relationship with God as His Father.

Jesus added to His prayer "Everything is possible for you."

Jesus then gave His prayer request of "**Take this cup from me.**"

Jesus then said "**But, I will do what you want, so have Your will in this matter.**"

*Have you ever felt that way? "God I don't like this, what I am going through. Take this from me. But, not what I want. Have your will."*

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**Mark 14:37** (NIV)

**37 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?"**

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It does not say that Jesus went back to the farthest level of disciples. It's pretty clear here that He only went to the closest disciples - the 3 of them.

Out of the 3 that were there, Peter, James, and John, Jesus only specifically addressed Peter. Not sure why. My guess is mainly that Peter was going to be a big key to the early church, as recorded in the book of Acts. He would later have a huge responsibility. With more responsibility has to come more dedication or devotion to God.

It sounds as if Jesus had been only gone praying for an hour because of how verse 37 says "Could you stop keep watch for one hour?"

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**Mark 14:38** (NIV)

**38 Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."**

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*What does their falling into temptation have to do with praying for Jesus? Was there more of a meaning here?*

To me it looks like Jesus is kind of making a general statement that their ability to watch spiritually, and pray, is what lowers their temptations in life.

*How are you doing with your own "watching and praying?" Are you seeing the difference?*

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**Mark 14:39-41a** (NIV)

**39 Once more he went away and prayed the same thing.**

**40 When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him.**

**41a Returning the third time, he said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? ..."**

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3 times the closest friends of Jesus - Peter, James, and John, failed to stay awake enough to consistently watch and pray.

*Ask yourself this morning: Do I understand what God has called me to do? Do I really "Get" what this is all about? BUT, is my fleshly side still so weak that I, like the disciples, might fail this test 3 times?*

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*The rest of verse 41, then verse 42:*

**Mark 14:41b -42** (NIV)

**41 b ... Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the**



**hands of sinners.**

**42 Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"**

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Honestly, they missed their chance to team up with God. Jesus said "Enough!" almost as if he was saying "This test is over. It is too late now, here comes my betrayer."

*Do you think that the disciples thought about this watch and pray thing later on, after Jesus died and was resurrected? Do you think they figured out what watching and praying was all about?*

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## **Conclusion -**

**This morning's Easter story is about the agony Jesus went through before He was arrested, falsely tried, beaten, and then crucified.**

**But, it is also about 2 levels of God followers.**

**The level next to Jesus was His 3 closest disciples, the ones He trusted the most.** They represent Christians who understand most of what it means to follow God, but still battle with the question "*Which is stronger - my spirit after God's own heart, or my fleshly side?*"

The farthest away level of disciples, represents people who are Christ followers but really are not as committed. They do not pursue God with all of their lives. They do not live their lives by "*Draw near to God, & He will draw near to you.*"

We are also told in many other scriptures to pursue God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Jesus never even asked the 8 to pray, nor did He share His heart with them. *What does that tell you?*

The benefit of being in God's closest circle of commitment is, when God sees your heart, He will in return, reveal His heart more to you. You will be included in His closest team. And, maybe like Peter later on, there will be big plans that God will have for using your life even more.

We have to ask ourselves this morning as we enter the Easter season:

*What kind of God follower am I? What level would I fall in? Do I need to ask God to help me move up to His inner core, and to ask Him to show me how?*

God needs us to be where He needs us to be, in order to effectively use our lives.

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**CLOSING PRAYER - LEE CONNER**