

³² They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." ³³ He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. ³⁴ "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch."

³⁵ Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. ³⁶ "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

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

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.

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

The place of ultimate personal decision-making is a lonely place. When all the events and relationships surrounding a decision are boiled down, one is left alone. Jesus asks his inner circle and "boldest" disciples to accompany him, but they fall asleep. Jesus calls out a lament to his Father, but experiences only silence in return. Despite the poignant symbolism of the movie, "The Passion," even Satan doesn't show up. At the moment of ultimate decision when he must wrestle with the horror to which the road of obedience will lead him, Jesus is alone.

Our obedience to God is a personal decision. We might take into consideration the experience of others, the witness of the saints and martyrs, the historical demonstrations of God's power, the emotional effect of the loving intervention of God through Jesus' sacrifice or some mountain-top experience, but all those are only the decision-making resources God makes available to all people. An obedience that will stand up to trial and temptation only comes from a personal decision. This obedience that we call discipleship is costly. Do not kid yourself; giving up control of your life and having your future dictated by God's will is not natural and easy. As it is described as dying in the Bible, it involves the suffering of giving up personal ambitions and dreams. But the Bible is equally clear, that with a personal decision comes personal responsibility. Only you will be held accountable for the decision you make.

Father, keep me from falling into the temptation of complacency. I know in my head that all things are possible for you, but not all things are consistent with your will. Help me to know that in my heart, so that I might seek to do your will instead of asking you to fulfill my desires. Grow me in my understanding and strengthen me in my dependence upon you. Amen.