

Good afternoon, everyone.

If you ever have the privilege to travel to the Holy Land, particularly around Jerusalem, one thing that will likely catch your eye is the number of **olive trees that dot the hillsides**. They seem to be everywhere. They grow where most other plants will not, in hard and rocky soil that's unfit for growing other trees and crops.

Right outside Jerusalem, in the **Kidron Valley** between the walls of Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives, and down in the Valley of Hinnom to the south of Jerusalem, you'll see dozens of olive trees in the olive groves on the hillsides and in the valleys. When I was there in 2005 I saw men, women and children **harvesting olives** after the Feast of Tabernacles. They had spread tarps and blankets under the trees and were out there shaking the trees and beating the limbs with sticks to loosen the olives so they would fall down onto the tarps and blankets, then they would gather them up and pour them into buckets and baskets to take them away for processing.

You could've seen the same scene 2,000 years ago, because during biblical times olives were probably the most important crop in the Holy Land. Olives, and the oil that came from olives, were vital commodities used in a lot of ways. **Olives were a major resource**. And the oil that came from olives had a lot of uses. I'll mention briefly some of them.

- **Olive oil was used for food**—much as we do today, consuming it with salads or bread. This was very important because it was a crucial part of their diet.
- **Olive oil was also used as a lotion** for *cleansing*.
- **Olive oil was used as a healing agent**—an antiseptic and disinfecting agent. You might remember the parable of the good Samaritan, in which the Samaritan poured oil and wine on the man's wounds to help in his healing.
- **Olive oil was used as fuel to provide light**. The average family would have a number of small oil lamps into which they would pour olive oil and light a wick, and it would provide light for hours off a small amount of olive oil.
- Olive oil also had religious uses. Oil was used for **lighting the menorah** in the Temple.
- Olive oil was a regular **part of the offerings at the Temple**.
- Olive oil was also **used for anointing**—as I covered in a previous sermon about the meaning of the words Jesus Christ, oil was used to anoint kings, priests, prophets and to set apart objects as holy. This is a depiction of Moses anointing Aaron as high priest.

How many of you have ever handled **raw olives as they come straight from a tree** rather than out of a jar or can? If you have, you know they're very hard and tough—almost as hard as rocks. So how do you get **olive oil out of olives?**

Several times in Scripture we find reference to presses. Usually those references are to wine presses—to the **vats where they would dump the grapes** and step on them with their feet to squash out the juice that would then be collected and turned into wine. Incidentally, I learned only recently why for so many centuries people squashed the grapes with their feet. It was because **the feet weren't hard enough** to crush the grape seeds, which would then give a bitter taste to the wine.

When it came to extracting olive oil, since olives are much harder than grapes, the process was much more difficult. It was a laborious process that took place in several stages. It started with **gathering the olives**. This was done by vigorously shaking the limbs of the olive tree or by **beating the limbs with a stick**. This would shake the olives to the ground where they would be picked up and taken to an olive crushing basin.

**Here's what an olive crushing basin looked like**. They were made of stone because they needed to be very hard to crush the olives. Once the olives were gathered, they were dumped into this large stone basin about eight feet in diameter. This large stone wheel would then be rolled around on the olives to crush them and to start pressing out the olive oil. **This wheel weighed** several hundred pounds and was so heavy that it took an ox, a donkey or several people to roll it by pushing or pulling on this wooden beam that ran through the middle of the wheel. Interestingly enough, **this same process is still in use to this day** in some areas, as we see here.

Only by this *tremendous weight and pressure* could the olives be crushed to begin to extract the oil. This would crush the olives into a thick, heavy pulp. This material would then be gathered into **heavy sacks something like round burlap bags** and then taken to an olive press. Here's a **photo of the most common type of press** that's been found in the Holy Land. It operated on the principle of applying yet another enormous amount of *weight and pressure* to the olives to press out the oil. The bags of crushed olive pulp were stacked on a stone base that had grooves carved into it into which the olive oil would flow as the olives were pressed. On top of these bags they would place another large heavy stone to press down on the bags with great pressure, because it took a huge amount of pressure to squeeze out the oil.

On top of that would be placed a large wooden beam anchored at one end to provide additional pressure. But even that wasn't enough, because to the end of this large wooden beam they would also tie large stones to add several hundred pounds of additional weight to supply yet even more weight and force to press down on the olives.

And finally **the oil would start to flow** as it was squeezed from the olive pulp as this great weight bore down on it. Several types or qualities of oil were produced by this method. The first—the best and highest quality of oil—was **used for the Temple**. It was given to God and would be used to light the menorah in the Temple and for offerings and for anointing.

As more weight was added to the olive press, the second grade or quality of oil began to be pressed out. This is the oil that would be used for medicinal purposes and household **eating and cooking**. And finally, as even more weight was added to the olive press, the lowest quality of oil was finally squeezed out. This oil would be used to **provide light in the household lamps** and as a lotion for cleansing.

This process of squeezing out the oil by great pressure would take several days to complete. Then nothing was left but the squeezed-out olive pulp. But even it did not go to waste, because it

was dried and then **used for fuel for fires for cooking and heating**. So nothing of the olive went to waste. It was all squeezed out and used up completely.

This **olive oil press** had an interesting name in Hebrew. Two Hebrew words were combined: **Gat**, meaning “press,” and **shemanin**, meaning “oil.” So the olive press was called in Hebrew a **Gatshemanin**. Does this remind you of a word we come across in the New Testament? Perhaps a word like—**Gethsemane**. *Gethsemane* is the Hebrew word for olive oil press transliterated into Greek.

This is been a rather long introduction to a sermon, but I wanted to give you this background for the subject will be talking about, which is **Lessons from Gethsemane**. Passover is coming up three weeks from this coming Thursday night, and each year we are to reflect deeply on the significance of Jesus Christ's sacrifice for us. And this year is no different. God commands us *to examine ourselves*—to consider what Jesus Christ went through on our behalf and to see whether our lives reflect an understanding and appreciation of what He went through for us.

As we've seen in our recent Bible classes on the Gospels, *God doesn't do things by chance*. He is a God of *purpose*. He is a God of *planning*. He is a God of *perfection*. And everything He does and everything He records in His Word is to *teach* us and help us grow in understanding. So today we'll go through some of the events of that last night of Jesus Christ on earth and see what lessons we can learn—from Gethsemane.

Let's set the stage for the story recorded for us. It's **Passover evening in Jerusalem**. A bright full moon shines over the city and the surrounding hills, bathing them in clear blue light. The Rabbi from Galilee, along with His disciples, His talmidim, had finished their Passover meal and sung a hymn. Then they walked down the streets of the city, past the enormous temple complex gleaming in the moonlight, then crossed a bridge over the brook Kidron that trickled through the Kidron Valley between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives, named for the olive groves that covered its slopes.

Reaching the Mount of Olives, several hundred yards across the valley from the vast temple complex, they stopped at a place they often stayed when visiting Jerusalem for the holy days. Jerusalem was packed with people at those times, and there weren't enough rooms to house everyone who came to the city. So people stayed wherever they could. Some simply camped out on the hills and valleys around the city, and some, like Jesus and His disciples, had made arrangements to sleep in a warm, dry cave nearby that they were either renting or perhaps the owner was letting them stay there as a favor to them.

Archaeologists have found and excavated a large but shallow cave on the lower slopes the Mount of Olives opposite the Temple Mount. The cave is about 60 feet wide and 35 feet deep, part natural and part enlarged by man. At the back of the cave they found notches in the walls where beams would have been placed for a pair of olive oil presses. It originally probably looked **something like this**. Not glamorous by any means, but warm and dry and comfortable as a place to spend the night when there weren't many options available.

**You can visit this site today**, although it's hard to recognize because it's been converted into a church built the top earlier churches that were constructed and destroyed over the centuries. So don't expect to see anything as it would have looked in Jesus Christ's day, because that no longer

exists. But it does seem likely that this is the actual site of these events. And of course, there are **truly ancient olive trees** just outside this cave. They probably don't date all the way back to the first century, because Josephus records that the Romans in 70 A.D. cut down all the trees within miles of Jerusalem to build military machinery and crosses on which to crucify Jewish prisoners, but I think it's quite possible that these trees sprang from the roots of the olive trees that were there 2,000 years ago.

So what happened there at Gethsemane, the place of the olive press, that evening almost 2,000 years ago? Let's review the story, starting in **Mark 14:32:**

**32 Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray."**

On that night the disciples were exhausted and sleepy. It was probably around midnight and they were tired from another long day. Most of them went to sleep, but not their leader. He had a great deal on His mind. He had come to this area named after the olive press to pray.

For weeks, perhaps several months, He had been saying strange things that puzzled them. What He had been saying was quite clear, but *they simply didn't believe Him*. Let's notice some of the things He had been saying over recent weeks and days that help us understand what was on His mind this evening:

**Matthew 20:18-19** Before they started their journey from Galilee to Jerusalem He told the disciples—

**18 "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death,**

**19 "and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again."**

**Matthew 26:2** Just a few days earlier He had told them—

**2 "You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified."**

**Matthew 26:10-12** Also a few days earlier, when Mary had anointed His feet with the valuable ointment and Judas had complained about it, He said—

**10 "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me.**

**11 "For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always.**

**12 "For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial.**

And earlier that same evening during the Passover meal He had said—

**Matthew 26:31-32**

**31 "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'**

**32 "But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."**

Jesus had been saying such things as they walked the hundred miles or so from Galilee to Jericho and then up the narrow winding road to Jerusalem. He knew what lay ahead. He and the disciples had seen victims of the Roman crucifixion at times, because crucifixion was meant to be a public display of the consequences of crossing the Roman government. They had seen the tortured men dying in the hot sun beside the roads and near the city gates of Jerusalem, and they knew what a

horrible death it was. But even knowing this, He continued forward to Jerusalem and His fate, *step by step by step*. With each step taking Him nearer to what lay ahead.

He had said some other strange things to them earlier that evening when He had broken the bread and passed around the cup of wine, things like—

**Reading from 1 Corinthians 11:24-25—**

**24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”**

**25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”**

What did it all mean? Perhaps some of the disciples wondered about it as they nodded off to sleep there at the cave of Gethsemane, the olive press.

Jesus could’ve avoided the horror that He knew was coming. Even now, at this late hour, He could’ve easily walked to the top of the Mount of Olives and down to Bethany on the other side, no more than a mile away, and then continued down the road another 10 or so miles to Jericho under the light of the full moon, and completely escaped what lay ahead. Or He could’ve simply walked out into the wilderness areas east of Jerusalem, again no more than a mile or two away, where no one could find Him. But He *would* not. He *could* not.

**Continuing our story back in Mark 14:33—**

**33 And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed.**

What is He feeling and experiencing? In Greek, it says He was *troubled, greatly distressed, anguished, depressed, full of heaviness*. He is feeling the weight and pressure of what He knew was coming bearing down on Him. Like an olive in the press of Gethsemane, He is being *crushed*, feeling the terrible growing weight *bearing down on Him*.

**What were the weights** pressing down on Him? What thoughts were racing through His mind at this time? Why was He anguished, distressed, full of heaviness?

- He knew that *those in His hometown of Nazareth* where He had grown up and knew Him from childhood *had rejected Him*. He knew that those of *Capernaum and Bethsaida and Chorazin* where He had taught and performed great miracles had refused to believe and rejected Him. A few hundred yards away across the Kidron Valley, *His beloved city of Jerusalem* which He had swept over a few days earlier, slept in the moonlight, also having turned its back on Him.

- He knew that *His own four half-brothers*, and possibly His half-sisters as well, were ashamed and embarrassed by Him and didn’t believe in Him. What would it have meant to have *just one of them by His side* as He had to face what lay ahead? But no, they didn’t believe in Him either. They had abandoned Him as perhaps crazy, someone they didn’t want to be associated with.

- He knew that *His closest friends, His beloved disciples* that He had spent the last 3 1/2 years with, teaching and training and spending all His time with, performing great miracles that they had witnessed, would soon abandoned Him and leave Him all alone to face His fate.

- He knew that Peter—*impetuous, eager, enthusiastic Peter*—one the three disciples He was closest to, the one who said he would follow His master anywhere, *would deny Him*—not once, not twice, but *three times* in the next few hours.

- He knew He would soon **face a sham trial** before the nation's religious leaders—hypocritical men who hated Him, who had long sought to discredit Him, who had spread lies about Him, who had accused Him of being a tool of Satan, who had hated His teaching, who had plotted to murder the resurrected Lazarus for no reason other than his resurrection was a sign that Jesus could perform great miracles—and now He would bear the full brunt of these leaders' hatred as they condemned him to death.
- He knew **He would soon be condemned by the Romans**. He knew He would not die by the Jewish execution method of stoning, which was over quickly, but He would face the cruelest kind of torture and death that mankind had ever invented.
- He knew, from the prophecies of Isaiah 53 that He Himself had inspired seven centuries earlier, that He would be **bruised and disfigured so badly** from the beating and the scourging that would come, that He would be **unrecognizable as a human being**.
- He knew that He would be **mocked, ridiculed, humiliated, spat upon**. He knew that before the sun set the next day thousands of people would walk by Him as He hung naked, suspended between heaven and earth, and they would *curse Him* as an evildoer. He knew that some of the same people who only four days earlier had waved palm branches before Him and praised Him as Messiah in only a few hours would be shouting to the Romans—*“Crucify Him!”*
- He knew that He, **“the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”** as John the Baptist had called Him, would die that coming afternoon as the Passover lambs began to be sacrificed at the temple.
- He knew that He, the very divine being who had life within Himself, **the Lifegiver** who had formed Adam from the dust of the ground and given him life, breathing into him the breath of life, the one who as the Logos had brought the entire incredible universe into being, and the earth with its incredible variety of plant and animal and bird and ocean life, would soon feel the sharp thrust of a spear in His side and He would feel His own life ebbing away as the blood flowed from Him until the blackness of death enveloped Him.
- He knew that He was **carrying on Himself the greatest weight one could possibly imagine**—the weight of the world, the weight of all the sins of *you and me and every human being who had ever lived and who would yet live*, the sins of every man, woman and child—every murder, every theft, every lie, every rape, every lust, every evil word, every curse hurled at God, every shameful and disgusting and degrading thought—it was *all on Him*. And the weight was *pressing and pressing and pressing* like the unrelenting pressure of the olive press.

How great was that weight? How severe was the pressure relentlessly bearing down on Him—crushing—squeezing—choking the life out of Him?

Luke's Gospel adds some details that the others leave out in **Luke 22:41-44—**  
**41 And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed,**  
**42 saying, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.”**

The awful weight of the agony and the sins of the world were more than He could humanly bear. The pressure is becoming unbearable for anyone to take. Being physical and human, He wanted with all His being to avoid what He knew was coming if there were any way for that to be possible. *But there was no other way.* And with the pressure building even greater, Luke says—

**43 Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.**

*Strengthening* Him, yes—but not *delivering* Him. He could've summoned thousands of angels, as He said on this same night, but He didn't. *One angel* came to strengthen Him.

**44 And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly.**

He intensified His prayers even more, in other words.

**Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.**

Luke, who was a physician, a doctor, recorded something none of the other gospel writers noted.

Luke says that Jesus was “in agony,” a Greek word that means *struggling severely in anguish*.

The *physical torture* will come later. *First* comes the emotional and mental torture. Luke the physician goes on to say that Jesus's sweat was “*like great drops of blood falling to the ground.*”

People have puzzled over this for years, but this is a real and rare medical condition called *haematidrosis*. It's rare, but it happens. It was documented is happening among English men, women and children during the height of the London blitz during World War II. As they huddled in bunkers underground at night, hearing the air raid sirens shrieking above them, listening to the boom-boom-boom-boom-boom of the antiaircraft guns and hearing the roar of the bombs as they shook the earth and hearing the screams and cries of the wounded, some people *literally started sweating blood*. It happens when the body is so stressed that the tiny blood vessels underneath the skin can't deal with the pressure and they burst—and the blood seeps out through the nearby sweat glands and the person literally sweats blood.

This is the kind of relentless, crushing, choking pressure our Savior felt that night at Gethsemane. The pressure was so great that the blood was *literally being squeezed from Him*, as the pressure from the enormous weight of the great stones pressed the oil from the olives. He knew the awful price that had to be paid for sin—*our* sin.

**One of the surprising things about olive oil** as it is pressed and squeezed out from the olives is *its color*. It is reddish-colored like blood as we see from this photo here. It's only when it's filtered and the impurities have settled out that olive oil appears in the familiar green color were used to. Like the olive oil, the press that Jesus was enduring would press out of Him His very blood.

**Continuing back in Mark 14:34—**

**34 Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch.”**

Again, consider the pressure He is feeling. He is so mentally tormented that He feels He is going to *die* from it. These aren't just exaggeration or flowery words. The stress and pressure were *crushing the life out of Him!*

**35 He went a little farther, and fell on the ground,** [He didn't just *kneel* in prayer; Matthew says He fell with His face down to the ground, stretched out in the dirt, probably squirming in anguish] **and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him.**

**36 And He said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me;** [He is pleading with all of His being that He not have to go through what He knows is coming, pleading that there might be some other way, any other way—but there isn't, and He says—] **nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will.”**

There was *no other way, no other solution* to the problem of human sin. God didn't say, "Sin doesn't matter, you can do whatever you want." He didn't say, "You can go to Buddha or Mohammad or Krishna or some other God." He didn't change His plan of salvation. There was only *one way* to pay the penalty for the sins of all mankind, and that was by Jesus Christ as the Creator God, the Creator of the human race, *taking on Himself the punishment that we deserved* as a sacrifice in our place.

As **1 Peter 3:18 (NIV)** puts it: **For Christ died for sins once for all** [for all mankind, for all time], **the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.**

There was no other way than for Him as our Creator to make the one sacrifice for all mankind for all time. It is God's grace, a free gift to us, but *it did not come without a price*. Jesus Christ paid the highest price imaginable.

Again, what was olive oil is used for and how does that relate to Jesus Christ and His sacrifice? The best oil, the highest quality oil, *was for God's use*. **It would light the menorah** in the Temple, representing the light of God. Who is the light of the world? Jesus says repeatedly that *He is the light*. It was also used for **offerings in the Temple**. Who gave Himself up as an offering to God to pay for our sins? Jesus Christ.

The best of the oil was also **used for anointing**. Who is the one who will heal the nations? Jesus Christ. What does "Christ" mean? It means the same as the Hebrew word *Messiah*, meaning one who is anointed. Who and what were anointed that we read about in the Bible? *Kings* were anointed. Jesus Christ is our coming King of Kings and Lord of lords as well as our Lord and Master now. *Priests* were anointed. Who is our high Priest? Jesus Christ. *Prophets* were anointed. Who is the greatest Prophet who ever lived and who foretold the future and revealed God's way to mankind? Jesus Christ. *The tabernacle and everything in it* were anointed. Why? To show that they were set apart for God's use and holy purpose. What did Jesus Christ say about Himself? He said, "I come to do My Father's will."

The next grade of oil that was pressed out of the olives was used for **medicinal purposes**. Who is the great healer? Jesus Christ. It was also used for **cooking and eating**. Who is the bread of life we symbolically partake of every year at Passover? Jesus Christ. Who is the sinless unleavened bread that we take in during the Feast of Unleavened Bread? Jesus Christ.

The next grade of oil that was pressed out of the olives was used **for cleansing**. Who is the one whose blood has washed away our sins and who cleans us up? Jesus Christ. It was also used for **lighting lamps to provide light**. Who is the one who lights our paths and gives us light so that we know how to live? Jesus Christ. Even the residue of the olive pulp that was left over after all the oil had been squeezed out was dried and **burnt for fuel and warmth**. Jesus Christ *gave everything of Himself, holding back nothing*. He is the one who warms us and comforts us in our time of need.

#### **Continuing back in Mark 14:37—**

**37 Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour?"**

**38 "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."**

**39 Again He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words.**

**What same words?** "*Abba, Father, please take this cup away from Me! I don't want to drink it! Isn't there some other way!?!?*"



But through all of this, He did all of this voluntarily. He wasn't forced to.

As **John 10:17-18** tells us:

**17 “Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.**

**18 “No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself.**

The Father *did not force this* on Him. He *chose this* for Himself, knowing full well the consequences of that choice—what He would have to endure for our sakes.

**Continuing back in Mark 14:40—**

**40 And when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him.**

**41 Then He came *the third time* [three times He does this, pleading that He might be delivered from what is to come] and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.**

**42 “Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.”**

**Switching over now to John 18:2-9 to pick up a few more details—**

**2 And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples.**

**3 Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.**

At previous times Jesus had avoided enemies because His time had not yet come. But now His time *had* come, and He didn't flinch from what must happen. He was ready to be taken, as prophecy had foretold, like a lamb to the slaughter.

**4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, *went forward* [He didn't draw back or hide or avoid them, instead He “*went forward*” to meet them] and said to them, “Whom are you seeking?”**

**5 They answered Him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said to them, “I am *He*.” And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them.**

**6 Now when He said to them, “I am *He*,” they drew back and fell to the ground.**

The “He” is added here. As we discussed in an earlier sermon on John 1, what Jesus said is “*I AM*,” using a form of the name of the God of the Old Testament—“*I AM THAT I AM*.” Why did they fall to the ground? Obviously Jesus did nothing. It seems evident that the Father must have caused this, or an angel.

**7 Then He asked them again, “Whom are you seeking?” And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.”**

**8 Jesus answered, “I have told you that *I am He*. [using a form of “*I AM THAT I AM*” again] Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way,”**

**9 that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, “Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none.”**

In this moment when He needed His friends and disciples most, Jesus told those arresting them to *let His followers go*. He alone would suffer, and *He would suffer alone*. They all fled into the night like scared rabbits, abandoning Jesus to His fate alone.

**Matthew 26:48** adds another tragic detail—

**48 Now His betrayer [Judas Iscariot] had given them a sign, saying, “Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him.”**

**49 Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed Him.**

It was unthinkable in that day and age for a disciple, a talmidim, to betray his rabbi and teacher. After all, the student was trying to become just like his master. Yet we see here that Judas betrayed his rabbi *with a kiss*—a sign of love and affection. This was an unthinkable betrayal, an

action that was unimaginable at that time!

And what is Christ's reaction to Judas's betrayal?

**50 But Jesus said to him, "Friend, why have you come?"**

I hear in that an infinite sadness—*"Friend, why have you come?"* Jesus knew exactly why Judas had come. And yet He calls Judas "friend."

**... 56 "But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.**

We're familiar with the rest of the story as He continued to bear the weight of the sin of the world that had begun at Gethsemane. He is arrested, taken for a sham trial where the verdict has long ago been rendered, false witnesses are brought in to lie about Him, He is struck, mocked, spat upon, ridiculed, condemned, beaten, scourged, crucified and finally stabbed with a spear—and with that the last of the oil—*His blood*—is squeezed from His bruised and crushed body, left hanging lifeless in the sun.

He felt indescribable pressure—sorrow—anguish—grief—terror—weight—and crushing burdens. And He had to bear it all for our sakes.

In 3 ½ weeks, as we come together to take of the Passover symbols, remember these things and think about the olive press. What was the press, the Gethsemane that Jesus Christ bore? It was *you*. It was *me*. It was *our sins* that did that to Him. He carried the weight of the world on Himself. *For you and for me*. He could've escaped it, could've avoided it, could've made other choices. But He didn't. He chose to go through that, and more, on that Passover almost 2,000 years ago. He did it for us, that we might share eternal life with Him in His Father's Kingdom.

Our story today began there on the slopes of the Mount of Olives. And hopefully we'll remember that as we partake of the Passover symbols in a few weeks. It's one of the most meaningful places in Israel to me, and I know a few of you have been able to visit that place as well. But you know what? *You're all going to be able to visit the Mount of Olives* if you remain faithful to the end, and take these things to heart and never lose sight of them. Because the Mount of Olives is the site for the next chapter in the story, a chapter we read about in **Zechariah 14:4**. Because Jesus Christ will return to earth, accompanied by His faithful saints. And to where will He return?

**Zechariah 14:4-9**

**4 And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south.**

...

**8 And in that day it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea; in both summer and winter it shall occur.**

**9 And the LORD shall be King over all the earth.**

*He wants more than anything for us to be there with Him on that day. He wants it so badly that He gave up everything, including life itself, that we might share in that future with Him. Take these things to heart. Don't let anything stand in your way. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. Let Him who died for you live again in you. As God in the flesh, He gave His life for man. If He as God gave His life for you, is there any sacrifice too great for you to make for Him?*

**Those are the lessons from Gethsemane—the olive press.**