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It may be very late on Thursday evening, or it may in fact be very early on Friday morning, the day of Jesus actual crucifixion as we think about the time frame of these events recorded for us by Luke and of course the other 3 gospel writers also.

Each author speaks of this time and it's significance. We may cross reference the other writers in order to get as complete an account as is possible to have in the words the Holy Spirit has authored through these pens.

If indeed it is very early on Friday morning, that means that Jesus will be offered up as a sacrifice for our sins sometime in the afternoon hours when the passover lambs are being slaughtered literally by the thousands in the temple.

A river of sacrificial blood will be coming out of the temple at the very time that God's final sacrifice, the ONE sacrifice that completes all of the former sacrifices that looked forward to a single future once-for-all sacrifice of finality to pay for sins.

The final meal together, the instituting of the Lord's supper which we still observe in obedience and remembrance of the One who died for us in our place.

It was a time of teaching in that upper room. We draw much of our doctrine

of the Holy Spirit and how God the Holy Spirit dwells within and provides the fruit in our lives that glorifies our Lord and God in us from the teaching that happened in those hours in that upper room.

I encourage you to read John's account of that time. Chapters 13 through 16 in the book of John encompass the teaching in that time frame of just a few hours that night.

And then in chapter 17 we have a window into this exact time period we will be considering in Luke 22 this morning as they exit the upper room and go into the Olive groves on the mount of Olives and Jesus prays His high priestly prayer.

I would note for you a stark difference between our verses in Luke 22 and what John records in chapter 17. In the passage we will consider this morning Jesus prays for Himself as He looks ahead at what the next 12 to 15 hours will bring upon Him. In John's gospel we have the record of what He prayed . . . for us.

Is that some sort of discrepancy? Of course not! Both prayers happened on that evening. We could even surmise that the disciples seem incapable of carrying out the prayers against temptation that He has told them to do, that He prays His high priestly prayer on our behalf, on His disciples behalf, because they couldn't accomplish it themselves.

Before we begin to unpack our verses in Luke 22 I want to look at a single word that Jesus keeps repeating, because understanding that word is a key that I hope will unlock this passage and perhaps help you to see it in a new way this morning.

That word is temptation. The greek word is peirasmos, and I love digging into words because I find out often that my first default understanding of the english translation is often shallow. Limited. This is such a word.

We think of temptation as a liability. My fallen flesh wants to sin. Sometimes

it seems like that's the only thing my flesh wants to do. We think of temptations as the diversions that lead away from the straight path into sin. That's not entirely wrong, but it isn't what the root word means.

The word itself simply means a test. An experiment that proves what the properties of the thing being tested are. Remember that litmus paper that we had in chemistry class in High School? The paper is saturated with a dye that has dried into the paper. When you dip it in an acidic liquid it turns different shades of red depending on how acidic the liquid is. When you dip it in basic liquids it turns different shades of blue.

Dipping the litmus paper into the unknown liquid is a peirasmos. A test. An experiment to gather data.

This week I experienced a phenomenon developing film. I was getting streaks through my pictures. Black lines. Annoying. The purpose of the pictures is to prove that an antique camera works perfectly so that I can offer it for sale and show the images as evidence. That's defeated with a bunch of pictures with black streaks through them even though it had nothing to do with the camera.

So I set about studying the problem. What's causing the black streaks. And I did 4 or 5 peirasmos, experiments, tests, to narrow down where the problem was coming from. Different film, no streaks. Aha, it's the film. But is it? I have 700 feet of that film and replacing it is in the \$500 range.

Next peirasmos. Same film different developer. No streaks. But in the old developer one film has streaks and a different brand does not. More peirasmos. Mix up a new batch of developer and try the sreaky film in the new version of the same stuff that's working fine on all the other film.

Voila. No streaks on anything with the new developer. I still don't know the exact chemical phenomenon that was causing the streaking with the old developer and that's probably beyond my paygrade, but through a series of peirasmos I was able to isolate the problem. Now I can make good pictures

and sell my camera which is also part of the peirasmos. Good pictures prove the value of an antique camera that actually works perfectly.

Testing, proving, testing, proving. peirasmos We translate it temptation. The temptation itself is neutral. All it does is prove what is there. There's another component of the word. peirasmos is a refining process.

Two weeks ago we talked about sifting wheat. Wheat comes out of the fields mowed off close to the ground and the usable part is on clusters that grow on stalks. So the process of shepherder bread starts with a lot of inedible stuff. Cattle might eat stalks like grass, but we don't want to eat sticks.

So we shatter all of that stuff. Beat it to pieces, literally. Then we sift it and sift it and sift it. The wheat berries fall through the sifter and the stalks and other inedible rubbish do not. We separate the usable from the unusable. Over and over until at last there's just a lot of microscopic dust and junk that is actually very small and goes through the sifter with the wheat berries.

Then we take that stuff and we find a place where there is a stiff wind, and we pour those berries out and they have enough weight to fall into a pile but the wind carries all that other junk away. It separates all of that useless inedible junk away from the wheat berries that we will then grind into flour to make bread.

That entire process of separating the usable from the unusable is incorporated into that word peirasmos. Satan is going to do what to the disciples? Sift them like wheat. Temptation is neutral. All it does is prove what is good and what is useless.

We put gold into a fire that burns up everything else, turns it into ash, and the gold is separated from the dross by the fires. That process is peirasmos. Testing. Proving. Separating. peirasmos is neutral but it shows what is valuable and what is worthless.

We've got one more problem to consider; Paul throws a wrench into the

process when he declares by the Holy Spirit, for all time; *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: Ro. 7:18*

We're going to be subjected to peirasmos, testing, to separate the good from the bad, but oops, Paul tells us, don't bother. There's nothing good there to find. But Paul is pretty specific. He's specifically talking about my fallen flesh. But there's hope, because I am more than the old fallen flesh. I've been quickened to life in my spirit, and God lives inside my heart.

The proving process separates old fallen me from new quickened to spiritual life me. But that refining process isn't necessarily fun. In fact my flesh usually hates it.

Consider all that I've just said as we look into what Jesus is going to tell His disciples to do and what He does during this critical time. Satan is going to be allowed to sift these disciples like wheat, a sifting that will prove whether they are wheat or chaff. He already proved that Judas was chaff. These men are about to get sifted.

But what about Jesus? God allows a certain level of proving for the disciples and they will ultimately glorify God. They'll turn the whole world upside down. But Jesus gets pressure at a level that we cannot even comprehend. Jesus glorifies God under pressures from Satan that would kill us. He's about to go into that battle with Satan.

39 And He came out and proceeded as was His custom to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him. 40 And when He arrived at the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation."

The walk from the temple mount to the garden of gethsemane would be perhaps a bit over a mile. If we walked together from where we're at right now down to Main street and up into the mining park to that highest headframe we see up on the hill there, it would be about the equivalent.

We don't know if the upper room added or subtracted from that amount, and

of course it doesn't matter. Young men in good shape who get everywhere they need to go with their feet would not find that distance of much note.

The mount of Olives offered seclusion. It was a grove atmosphere. Olive trees. Someone who is sympathetic with Jesus allows them to use this place. It wasn't a public campground place. Somebody owned those groves. Just like the upper room. God has His people everywhere who sympathetically offer to the One who has no place on this earth to call His own, to lay His head, a place of seclusion and privacy to use.

Just like our example of the mining park from here, they lose elevation going down across the rather steep Kidron valley and up the slopes of the Mount of Olives. A bit more than a mile. Jesus leads, they follow.

After His teaching, after all that has been said, this isn't like all the other nights with Him where it's exhaustion and good rest to replenish for whatever comes next. There must have been a sense of foreboding on this night. I envision a great sadness.

One thing strikes terror into the heart of a christian; Being separated from Jesus. With Him we're everything, without Him we're nothing. He has told them, I'm leaving. I'm going where you cannot go, not now anyways. I'm sending the Holy Spirit to be with you.

Being physically with Jesus was their comfort above all other comforts. That's why they left house and home and family, temporarily, in order to be with Him. Nothing sounds emptier to these men who have given up so much already than to be told, I'm leaving. I'm going away.

That's impossible. What will fill that void? You are our comfort. Our everything. How is it that we can be separated from you. He says to them, I will send the Comforter. The Holy Spirit fills that void, in every christian in every place at every time.

Jesus could only be in one place at one time with these 11 men. The Spirit

indwells all of the church that belongs to Jesus. The Holy Spirit is omnipresent. Jesus told them that would be better, but they don't yet understand.

For now they just follow Him, rather dumbfounded and with the foreboding of losing the one presence that defines them. Down into the valley and up the other side. Losing Jesus? That's impossible to process. And we're going to see the debilitating sadness in a few verses.

But for now, they get to their destination, and Jesus says; "*Pray that you may not enter into temptation.*" peirasmon

What did he tell them earlier. Satan has requested to sift you like wheat. In light of that what does he tell them now? Pray! Pray in order to avoid the temptation? Pray that God will restrain the temptation? Pray that you'll survive the testing, intact. Pray that you are in fact wheat, and not chaff.

Sifting is going to come. Pray that you'll be in the pile of fruit, not the chaff that gets burned up. Pray to come out the other end of the testing in a way that brings God glory.

Me, I'm a wimp. I pray too often, Don't give me what I deserve. Give me grace instead that I don't deserve. It's been pretty easy so far to be a christian in this land in this time frame. I'm fearful of being sifted by Satan, even though I have the confidence of someone being held, being kept by someone who is stronger than Satan. Sifting isn't fun.

He told them Satan was requesting to sift them. He told them that they were outlaws now. They will be numbered with the transgressors. The world is going to hate them. What weapons do they have in this warfare? Well, prayer is certainly one. Pray for yourself. Pray for your fellows. Pray.

Doesn't the Lord's prayer address this exact phenomenon? "*lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*" Jesus tells them now the exact thing that He told them to pray when they asked Him to teach them to pray.

Satan wants to break you in half, turn you into chaff, blow you away with a winnowing wind. The world wants to harm you. The world hates Me and you're next in line when they can't get to Me. Pray for God to intervene. We're supposed to be doing that.

Christians in Afghanistan getting turned inside out since the US bailed out on them. And I'm guilty. I haven't spent 60 seconds praying for those folks. God WILL intervene when His children ask Him to. But we have to ask.

That's what Jesus tells these men. Testing is coming at you from all directions. You need to pray for intervention.

41 And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and began to pray,

I think now is a good time to look at just a short portion of John 17 which records some of the words that Jesus prayed on this night. I urge you to go read that entire chapter. We don't have the time this morning to do that meaningfully, so I urge you to read John 17 on your own. I'll read vs. 13 - 21

13 "But now I come to Thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy made full in themselves. 14 "I have given them Thy word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 15 "I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. 16 "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 17 "Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth. 18 "As Thou didst send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19 "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. 20 "I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; 21 that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me. Jn. 17:13-21

That's what a prayer of intervention sounds like. You and I might not be here,

except that prayer, on that night, looks all the way forward to and encompasses not just the disciples, but all who would believe through their witness. Pinch yourselves. Here we are. Prayer works.

Matthew tells us that Jesus told 8 of the disciples to wait at a certain place and took Peter and James and John further into the place of prayer. It was further from them a stones throw that He went to pray. Twice He came to find them sleeping, and a third time, and time was up. Judas had come. That's in Matthew 26.

But now we move to Jesus prayer on His own behalf. If we just had John's high priestly prayer on our behalf we wouldn't know the depth of crushing trouble that Jesus endured on that night before his crucifixion. Luke says;

42 saying, "Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done."

Many scholars say this is the heat of the battle, right here, in the garden, Satan comes to defeat Jesus at this moment. What is the cup Jesus speaks of? What is Satan crushing Jesus with, to very nearly the point of physical death?

Jesus is Holy, Holy, Holy. For eternity past to eternity future, Jesus has been and will rule forever; Holy. Spotless. Sinless. Pure. Perfect in every way.

I can only answer from a single person's perspective. At the cross Jesus becomes me and I become Him. He takes upon Himself all of my vile filthy wretched sin, and He gives me His righteousness.

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. 2Cor. 5:21

All you've ever been is Holy Holy Holy and now it's time to become filth filth filth. If I was the only person **in** that equation it would be enough to crush Jesus under the weight of the filth that is just me. But multiply that times the sand of the seashore.

That's the cup that Jesus is looking at. Filth that demands God's fierce wrath in judgement. Crushing if it was just me alone, but it's you, and you, and you, and every christian ever purchased out of this world. We can't begin to understand the weight of all of that sin. But Jesus could.

The bible understates these things. No fanfare. No visuals, at least not much. We're about to get a tiny visual thanks to Dr. Luke. But all in all, the bible just states the impossible as very plain ordinary language.

*“Father, if Thou art willing, remove this **cup** from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done.”* That cup is all the sins from all of the sinners God has chosen out of this world to be purchased for His own possession. Face the fierce wrath of God for all of that sin, Jesus.

Luke's account is brief, lumping everything together. But Luke's account is powerful. Both Matthew and Mark tell us Jesus tells Peter and James and John that His soul is in distress to the point of death. Luke, the doctor, gives us dimensions of that we wouldn't know without his perspective.

43 Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. 44 And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.

All of the fury of hell is trying to prevent Jesus from dying in our place. The pressure of the battle, physically, causes blood capillary's to burst beneath the surface of Jesus skin and blood mixed with sweat falls to the ground.

A quote to explain this rare phenomenon; ““And His sweat” – hidrōs, from which we get hydro, water. And “drops of blood” – thromboi haimatos– thrombosis is a medical term. This suggests a very, very dangerous condition known as hematidrosis, the effusion of blood in one’s perspiration caused by extreme anguish and physical pain, subcutaneous capillaries dilate and burst, mingling blood with sweat brought Him to the threshold of death.”

John MacArthur <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/42-273/four-features-of-triumphant-prayer>

Only one other time in scripture does an angel come to the aid of Jesus. That was after 40 days of no food in the wilderness and then in His weakened physical state, the temptation by Satan. After that event an angel had to come and minister to Him.

The pressure of this battle, this night, in these moments has almost physically destroyed Jesus. Great drops of blood, like sweat fall to the ground. Physically He is near death in this battle, looking at the filth He will endure in our place.

Again the understatement of our Bibles. He tells His disciples He is grieved to the point of death. That wasn't hyperbole folks. That's quite literal. An angel doesn't come and minister to Him if that's just hyperbole to make His point. He was literally grieved to the point of death.

45 And when He rose from prayer, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping from sorrow, 46 and said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation."

We have physical limits. Luke is the only one, again, Luke the Doctor with his special knowledge of human capabilities and limits from a physicians perspective, Luke tells us these disciples were sleeping from sorrow.

They have reached their physical and emotional limits. Exhaustion from round the clock keeping up with Jesus in this final week, exhaustion from the long hours in the upper room trying to absorb what He is teaching them about Him being taken away from them, broken hearted that everything they had hoped for seems to be collapsing in on itself, and their bodies have shut down.

They weren't sleeping from dis-obedience. Jesus told them to pray. I'm sure they tried for a time to do that, but physical and emotional limits have shut them down. Luke wants us to understand that. Sleeping from sorrow. They had come up against a physical - emotional limit switch and shut down.

The closest comparison might be a woman in child birth. At the end, from complete exhaustion, I've witnessed that between the contractions, a woman in childbirth will sleep. Moments of sleep and then the next wave attacks. I think that's where these men are at. Their bodies have overruled their minds. They sleep.

We sleep. Like the disciples we are clueless of the powers of darkness at work in this world beyond our eyesight. Probably a good thing in a way. It might be terrifying to see the spirit world at work beyond our vision. I'm sure it would be.

On the other hand it might be dis-heartening to find out the evil spirit world isn't the least concerned about what we're doing here because they don't need to be. We take care of the powerlessness perfectly well without them doing anything.

I'd actually love it if the forces of evil were concerned about our ministry here. "Those guys in Tonopah are a real pain in our neck..." I'd like to be a pain in Satan's neck. I don't think he's too worried about me.

This night in the garden is a night where all of the powers of darkness are focused on Jesus and these disciples. Jesus says exactly that in vs. 53 that we'll consider next week. He tells the high priests' "*but this hour and the power of darkness are yours.*"

I have three things given to me, inherited from Adam, born into my flesh that I struggle against. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Jesus has three things that He is struggling with on this night. He's struggling with Holy, Holy, Holy. Satan is bringing the pressure against Him of trading places, on that cross with me.

When He does that I will be Holy, Holy, Holy, and He will take on Himself all of my sin. All of yours. All of the combined sins of every chosen person who He will redeem. Satan is crushing Him with the reality of that.

No wonder that He prays; *“Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done.”*

45 And when He rose from prayer, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping from sorrow, 46 and said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.”

I don't have much patience with sentimentalism in feel good christianity. But there is a kernel of truth in that *footsteps in the sand* poem thingy that has made the christian bookstores more money than John Bunyan's books.

The Lord replied: "My precious child, I love you and would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."

This is an instant where Jesus warned these men two or three times to pray that they not be tested by Satan who wants to get his hands on them bad. They were too physically and emotionally spent to do it.

The prayer for me, prayed that very night in the garden, is such a prayer. We wouldn't survive this deal if it wasn't for Jesus care and prayer for us. Like the disciples that were too frail to join in the battle that night. Jesus prayed for them. Satan did test them but within the limits of Sovereign God's care. They would not be lost.