

## Sermon for Mid-week Lent #2

**Date:** March 11, 2020

**Location:** St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

**First Reading:** Romans 13:8–14

**Second Reading:** Mark 13:32–37

**Passion Reading:** Mark 14:32–42



**Sermon Text:** Mark 14:32–42

**Sermon Title:** Sleepy Eyes

### Hymns:

CW – Our Eyes Behold the Savior's Face

LSB 420 – Christ, the Life of All the Living (v.1,3,7)

LSB 694 – Thee Will I Love, My Strength, My Tower

### Liturgy:

Divine Service: Creative Worship



Pastor James Groleau  
St. John's Lutheran Church  
1200 13th Avenue NW  
Austin, MN 55912  
Office: (507) 433-2642  
Shepherd@JamesPlace.net  
StJohnsAustinLCMS.org  
FaceBook.com/StJohnsAustin  
Twitter.com@StJohnsAustinMN  
FaceBook.com/Shepherd.James.Groleau  
KAUS 1480 AM Sun. 9:00am



## **Text: Mark 14:32–42**

They went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. And he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch.” And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.” And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer him. And he came the third time and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough; the hour has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.”

**NOTE: Copyright** information.

Bible Translation: GOD’S WORD®, © 1995 God’s Word to the Nations. Some readings have been adapted to better reflect the original Greek or Hebrew.

Credit for Images:

Pronunciation for difficult words are contained in { }

© 2020 James Groleau.

Permission is granted to use these sermons for any non-profit purpose. I only ask that credit, as to their origination, be noted appropriately.

Grace to you and peace in Jesus' name. Amen.

Have ever had an experience of being so tired that you can't fight the fatigue and you drift off to slumber. We can all probably identify with Peter, James, and John as they gave in to exhaustion in Gethsemane, while Jesus watched and prayed to His Father.

It had been a busy, exciting, scary, confusing, roller-coaster week for the disciples. No wonder they had sleepy eyes. Who knows if Peter, James, and John had gotten any sleep since they had heard the sermon from Jesus about staying awake and watching for the Last Day.<sup>1</sup> On top of that, what could be more boring than watching someone else pray? As far as their own praying went, well, have you ever nodded off during your own prayers? They reclined on the soft grass in the garden, they had just finished a big meal, the cool night air was perfect for sleeping. A nap was inevitable, right?

It was sinful that they didn't do as Jesus told them, but let's be honest, we would probably have done the same if we had been in their shoes. Now is not the time for self-righteousness and Peter-James-and-John-bashing. It happened the way it had to. This event teaches us to identify sinful humans as sleepyheads whose willing spirit cannot overcome the weakness of their flesh.

This scene also shows us Jesus as the Lord of Israel who neither slumbers nor sleeps, whose eyes were set only on doing God's will. When it came time for all righteousness to be fulfilled and all the sin of the world to be paid off, it had to be Jesus. He had to be the only one awake to persevere through the homestretch to suffer, and then to sleep the sleep of death in the tomb, for us and for our salvation.

Tonight's Passion Reading places before our eyes the depths of woe Jesus would suffer for us. We see Him in the Garden of Gethsemane, sorrowful and troubled. The weight of the world's sins pressed down heavily on Him. He fell down in weakness and trembling, begging, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Remove this cup from Me." The cup Jesus spoke of was the cup of His Father's wrath against all the sin of the world. God's wrath and His unfettered rage, and furious outpouring of condemnation.

Jesus did not want to drink that cup. Perfect, sinless, holy Jesus, whose will was truly perfect, prayed that He would not have to drink the cup of God's wrath, and He knew that it was possible for His Father to change things.<sup>2</sup> Which teaches us that death and hell are not good or desirable. Death, decay, and eternal suffering

1 Mark 13:32-37

2 Mark 14:36

was not God's plan for humanity, those are consequences of Adam's fall,<sup>3</sup> which involved us all. Except for Jesus. He was sinless. He didn't deserve death. He didn't deserve to drink the cup of God's wrath. His prayer certainly wasn't cowardly or faithless, but was the language of faith in God from whom all things are possible.

Now, I did leave out some essential words from Jesus' prayers. He didn't stop with, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." He continued, "Yet not what I will, but what You will." Again, He prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, Your will be done." And a third time, He prayed the same prayer.

Then the Father answered His Son's prayer. The Father's will was for Jesus to suffer to spare you. The Father answered Jesus' prayer by giving His Son who would accept His good and gracious will, and the Son willingly went into captivity when Judas showed up to betray Him. Moments later, Jesus said that all this was done to "let the Scriptures be fulfilled."<sup>4</sup>

The Father's will was to crush His own Son and make Him an offering for the guilt of our sin. Parents cannot begin to wrap our minds around how the Father could love us sinners enough to pour out His wrath against His own Son. It torments us to see our own children suffer. How could God kill His own Son?

Now the Father eternally loves His Son, and Isaiah's prophecy of Jesus death did not stop with the death.<sup>5</sup> It pointed forward to Easter when Jesus appeared to the disciples and said, "Peace be with you." When He had said this, their eyes looked on His hands and His side. "Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord."<sup>6</sup>

Through all this Jesus had eyes only for His Father's will and your salvation. Through this He fulfilled what He had told His disciples

"I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will but the will of Him who sent Me. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that I should lose nothing of all that He has given Me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."<sup>7</sup>

3 Genesis 3:6

4 Mark 14:49

5 Isaiah 53

6 John 20:19-20

7 John 6:38-40

The good and gracious will of God is that you set your eyes on the Son, believe in Him, and have eternal life as a free gift. With that Good News in mind, you can fall asleep in peace each night, awake to serve Him each morning, and when your eyes eventually sleep in death in this world, you can be confident that they will awaken to everlasting life in the world to come.

In Jesus' name. Amen.