

After Judas Iscariot left the supper, Jesus began a long and deep sequence of teaching and prayer (Jn chaps.13 - 17), and predicted Peter's threefold denial and disciples desertion to come later that same night (Mt 26v13-35). At some point during this they left the upper room and headed for the Mount of Olives (Mt 26v30, Jn 14v31). This was their 'usual' journey in the evenings of that week (Lk 22v39, Lk 21v37-38). After finishing teaching at the Temple – He and the disciples returned to stay at Bethany each evening (some probably with Martha, Mary and Lazarus), which was only about 1.5 miles out of the city.

Despite this short walk, the whole period which began in the upper room after Judas' departure and culminated with the arrest in Gethsemane must have taken a few hours. It is Jesus who actually facilitates His own arrest (Jn13v27) and triggers a set of events in God's perfect timing allowing Him to finish His teaching and prayer exactly prior to the arrest. We may think that Judas and the priests would have **arrived** quickly, because Jesus told Judas to **act** quickly, but consider what would need to be organised as the priests then had to work out how to set up a court, successfully try Jesus and persuade the Romans to execute him all before the Sabbath started in less than 24 hours!

Insight into the heart of Jesus' prayer (vv36-46)

Let's consider the following aspects of Jesus' prayer life and compare it with our own:

- A time and place for deep, concentrated prayer on a single very important issue (c.f. Lk 6v12)
- Personal relationship with God is essential for prayer: 'My Father, ...' Only the Christian has the Holy Spirit to make prayer effective. (Eph 6v18 & Rom 8v26-27).
- Emotional engagement of heart and mind (v38, Lk 22v44). We see Jesus' humanity here and he understands our frailty (v41).
- Urgency: Jesus really **needs** to pray about this. How do we approach coming to prayer? Jesus knows He will pass through death and rise again, yet His 'soul is overwhelmed to point of death' (v38). What physical and spiritual agony did He envisage? (See also Jn 11v35 – why weep when he knows the outcome?)
- Specific – do we ask directly in clear, straightforward language about our needs (see Mt 6v7-8)?
- Persistence – the exhausted disciples only hear the first snatch of what Jesus is praying about each of the three times before they fall asleep, note that He is earnestly and intimately praying to His heavenly Father about the same key issue each time. (c.f. Lk 18v1-8)
- When God says 'No...': even for Jesus – we don't always get what we ask for. What truth we need to hold above everything else (v39, 42). See Heb 5v7: Jesus experienced obedience in His suffering and our salvation depended upon Him doing this.
- We grow when prayer is not answered as we ask (Rom 8v28, 2 Cor 12v7-10, Rom 5v1- 5). At times of deepest crisis, intimate prayer with God provides the 'peace that transcends all understanding' (Phil 4v6-7). What kind of peace is this? God won't forsake us – ultimately He will bring us home to Him, one way or another – whether right now in death, or at some other point in the future if we're delivered out of our present crisis.
- 'The hour has come' (v45b-46): Intense prayer **encourages** and **strengthens us** so we're **resolute** for what comes next.

The Arrest (vv47-56)

The priests & Temple Guard fear a greater power: what happens when Jesus declares 'I am He' (Jn 18v6). Note Judas' callous betrayal with words and signal of apparent love and friendship (v49). Jesus rebukes His would-be defender and highlights the sovereign power behind the scenes (v52-56). Scriptures will be fulfilled which refer to His coming as the Saviour, such as Isa 53 which give details specific to Jesus' trial and crucifixion. (See Lk 22v37, where Jesus directly quotes Isa 53v12). These begin with v56 (cf. v31).