

Mark 14: 32-42

32 They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I pray.' 33 He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. 34 And he said to them, 'I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.' 35 And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. 36 He said, 'Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.' 37 He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, 'Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? 38 Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' 39 And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. 40 And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him. 41 He came a third time and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42 Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.'

Meditation: This is one of the most profound passages in all of scripture! We find Jesus here at his most vulnerable. He is 'distressed and agitated.' He is 'deeply grieved, even to death.' He knows what lies ahead for him. The religious authorities have made it quite clear. Yet Jesus knows that his ultimate destiny lies in the hands of a greater sovereign than the movers and shakers of this world. Is there another way? Could he fulfill his messiahship without this last and worst assault of suffering? He knows the answer. But he struggles. He is human after all! But besides his own internal struggle, Jesus must also deal with the disappointing reaction of his closest followers. They are not in touch with Jesus. They have persistently refused to face the developments Jesus has predicted will take place. Their response is not that of fear. This would imply an acceptance of reality. Rather their resistance to Jesus' destiny (and their own as his followers) comes in the form of denial. They sleep. Their spirits may be willing, but their flesh determines their actions.

Jesus must come to terms simultaneously with the price of his call to be the incarnation of divine love in the world, as well as the loneliness of this call as his friends are unable to accompany him.

Have you ever been disappointed in someone you had hoped or expected would be there for you in your difficult time? Has someone else accused you of disappointing them or letting them down when they've needed you? Sometimes we resent others burdening us? Sometimes we suspect it as a form of manipulation, hooking us in. Sometimes we're just tired and overwhelmed and running on empty. What do we need to replenish our souls?

Protests continue against black racism, and in our country, indigenous racism too, especially where police and authorities are concerned. What do black and indigenous siblings need to persevere in the struggle until something meaningful changes in the right direction? What do the rest of us need in order to continue our support as allies?

How do we replenish our souls with the kind of compassion and passion for justice that feels deeply and is energized without it turning into hate or resentment?

Prayer: We need your love energy, O God... We are exhausted all too often... We're running on empty all too often... We resent and we push away and we want to run away... Bring us back, O God... refuel us with your love, O God... ground us again with a new peace, not so much to do, but to be. And as we are, may new clarity about the doing also come; Amen.