

Church of Christ Congregational
Worshipping at Home
April 5, 2020

Consider: This week we join Jesus in the Garden. Gethsemane is the moment when a chain of events begins that cannot be halted. Once Jesus is taken into custody, there is no going back. So we pause a moment with him in the garden just before his arrest, and we feel with him the temptations that arise when facing difficult circumstances-to run, hide, use whatever power we have to change things, fight it, perhaps even bargain with God. We walk among the sleepy disciples who just can't grasp what is about to happen. Which character in this story is the most relatable to you?

Confess:

Here we are, Jesus. We find ourselves alongside you in a garden of grief for the violence so many of this world endure. We are tired. We don't know what to do next. And so we sleep sometimes, hoping to awake from a bad dream. Forgive us, O God. Help us face this hour knowing you are always here. You only ask the same of us... to be present, to be awake. You entered our story through Jesus, now help us to enter fully into the story of your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Sing or Listen: [Gethsemane](#)

Be Assured: Know this: We can open to let the story remind us that no matter what we face, or how we fail to meet the demand of the moment, second chances are possible. You are forgiven and freed, encouraged and loved by a God who wants you to live fully. Thanks be to God.

Read God's Word:

Mark 14: 32-36 NRSV

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."

Ephesians 6: 11-17

11 Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. 14 Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. 15 As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. 16 With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Watch: [Entering the Passion of Jesus: Session 6-Gethsemane](#)

Think or Discuss: Jesus's defense in the moments in the garden was prayer-not the sword that one of his disciples wanted to use to protect him, but prayer. Prayer was Jesus's source of power-a prayer that God's will would sustain him through the next day. Jesus knows what is about to go down, and he will not use violence in these last hours. In this story of gardens, friends, captors, and swords-what moves you most? Where do we go, what or whom do we surround ourselves with in our darkest nights? What or whom provides support when we are called by God to do hard things?

Do: Make a list or a photo collage of your support systems that you can rely on when God calls you to do a hard thing.

A Time of Prayer and Reflection

We remember today all who grieve, who feel that they have no way out of their circumstances. We mourn all who have no choice but to live with violence that threatens their lives. We remember those who work for less violence in the world, creating protection and possibilities of a safer existence for all people.

Pray: Use this time to pray, silently, at first, and then for others who need your prayers. Finally, pray the Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Sing or Listen: [Abide With Me](#)

***OUR COMMON COMMISSION**

Let us now go forth into the world in peace; being of good courage, holding fast to that which is good, rendering to no person evil for evil, strengthening the faint-hearted, supporting the weak, helping the afflicted, honoring all people, loving and serving the Lord, and rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Bless and Be Blessed: May the God of Peace and the Peace of God be with you always.

