

LIVE THE STORY

We must not only love the Gospel Story, we must begin to live the Gospel Story, indeed, to have the Central Character live in us.

- Have you ever felt like you were at an impasse with sin, a standoff? ...as if there is no way of escape?
- What does this text tell us about how to be ready when temptation comes? ... about why we often are not?
- Do you ever find yourself unprepared for temptation? Or do you self-confidently move forward assuming you will have what it takes when you get there?
- Why did the disciples fall away? On what account? What does this say about expectations of Jesus that we may have?
- Can you see ways in which your flesh demonstrates an hatred for and avoidance of death and shame?
- Why were the disciples oblivious to their potential failure? Do you see this in your own life?
- What do you think of the statement, “Every sin is at one level a denial of Christ”? Or, “Every sin for a Christian, is because though the spirit is eager on the one hand to follow, the flesh is powerless”? Does this mean we are hopeless to overcome sin?
- How do you prepare for temptation? Do you even have a category for that?
- Jesus evidently didn't think He was ready for the temptation He was about to face, so He went to the oil press of prayer. Do you? How might this text change your approach to overcoming sin?
- Why, if Jesus could call 12,000 angels to deliver Him, didn't He? Are there things that we should not pray for though we are given the promise, “Ask and you shall receive”? Why?

Overcoming the Standoff in Your Battle with Sin

Jerry Cisar—September 20, 2009

Text: Matthew 26:30-75

Introduction: The Great Battle for Every Disciple

A. Matthew 26:41 The spirit vs. the flesh... a cop-out?

a) willing: eager, zealous, willing, desires to do right.

b) weak: powerless, without strength, infirm, unable, feeble, sickly.

B. Our text today is actually about overcoming this stalemate in our battle with sin.

Adolph Schlatter: *“The flesh is weak. It's desire is bound to what is seen. ...The flesh abhors death, and shame is bitter to it.”*

I. Your Spirit is Willing (Matthew 26:30-35)

A. Not just Peter, but all the disciples, will fall away... will fail.

i. And why? On account of Jesus...

B. Insistence on success

Before we can learn the secret to overcoming temptation we must first see clearly just how powerless we are against sin!

II. Your Prayer Life is Wanting (Matthew 26:36-46)

A. To a place called **Gethsemane**.

B. Self-confidence leads to complacency in prayer.

The disciples seem unaware of the danger that lies ahead. They are confident in their ability to handle it.

- i. Jesus didn't think He was ready! He was sorrowful and troubled.
- ii. We can learn a lot about prayer from Jesus here.
 - a) How are we to pray when facing great difficulty?

The fact is, every battle with sin is the most difficult situation we face... and we don't usually know it is coming.

- b) *"My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."*

C. Jesus gives all disciples an invitation to join Him in prayer.

a) Romans 8:22-27

b) Ephesians 6:12-18

III. Your Flesh is Weak (Matthew 26:47-75)

A. Complacency ends with a mob "with swords and clubs".

i. But it is too late now...

ii. Peter's denial

Temptation without the divine grace of prayer reveals our complete inability, our powerlessness, against the enemy of our souls.

Adolph Schlatter: *"When the disciples do not place themselves under the protection of divine grace through prayer, they are exposed to temptation...they are brought into situations that confront them with well-aimed blows."*

B. But Christ did not waver... and therefore we have hope!