

All Things in the Father - Prof. John Angus Macleod

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[0 : 00] Let's turn now back to Mark's Gospel in chapter 14. Mark's Gospel in chapter 14. Reading at verse 32.

And they went to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, Sit here where 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. Going a little further, 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.

Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Last night we were looking at all things, and the Christian, with God, all things are possible.

[1 : 23] That's what makes conversion. That's what makes sanctification. That's what makes mission possible. because the God of the Bible, our Father in Christ, is the one who does the impossible.

Tonight we want to look at all things and the Father from this text, where Jesus says, Abba, Father, all things are possible for you.

Remove this cup from me. Get not what I will, but what you will. There's something about this text that I find very uncomfortable to preach from.

And I do mean what I said in prayer, that I feel we're on holy ground. It's one thing for Jesus to go through this experience, and even for the words of Scripture to describe it in a measure for us.

It's another thing for us for a moment to be able to understand it. We may observe it in a measure. We may observe what Jesus went through, through the words of the text, but to actually understand what he went through is quite another matter.

[2 : 50] Quite another matter. Tonight I want us to look at four things. First of all, Gethsemane, this place of olives, the olive press, that's what Gethsemane means.

It's down in the valley. Later on, Golgotha Calvary will be up on top. That's where the crucifixion will take place.

But before that crucifixion takes place on the top, Jesus is down in the valley in Gethsemane. And I want us to look at Gethsemane and the providence of the Father.

Secondly, Gethsemane and the distress of Jesus. Thirdly, Gethsemane and the prayer for deliverance. And finally, Gethsemane and the place of submission.

First of all, then the providence of the Father. Jesus didn't just land at Calvary and lay down his life for his people.

[4 : 01] There was a journey. That journey was predicted and prophesied over millennia. And then Jesus came into the world as a little one.

And that journey, that would then take several decades before he would finally reach Calvary, where he would lay down his life. But even in these final years, months, and weeks, the Father himself was preparing the journey that would lead him to Calvary.

And Gethsemane was the last stop before Calvary. And it's interesting, Jesus says, elsewhere, that all his teaching ministry, he was teaching what the Father gave him to teach.

In fact, he's even more specific than that. He's not just teaching on the subjects that the Father wanted him to teach on. He's actually using the words that the Father gave him to speak.

every word, every look, every manner was what the Father gave him to share. So he's the one who went on this journey speaking the words that the Father gave him to speak.

[5 : 32] On that journey, he's the one who had, for example, to rebuke Peter, who tried to stop him going to the cross and to say to Peter, you are paying attention to the things of men, not the things of God.

And as Jesus spoke these words to Peter, he was also being reminded by the Father that his own mind must be filled with the things of God.

When Peter said to him, you're not going to suffer, far be that from you. Jesus went on to say, I will suffer. I will be put to death.

The rulers will put me to death. And I will rise again. It will happen. And as Jesus spoke these words given to him by the Father, he wasn't just speaking to Peter, he was relaying to himself what would be his future.

He was being brought to this unbroken consideration of the things of God on all this journey. Shortly after, Jesus told them that he was going to be a suffering Christ.

[6 : 59] He called them, if they wanted to follow him, to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him. And as he was speaking to the disciples, telling them, you want to follow me?

Then you deny yourself, you take up your cross, and you follow me. But he was also speaking to himself, if I am to do the Father's will, I must deny myself, take up my cross, and follow him.

when he spoke on death and resurrection, the death and resurrection of the Christ to the disciples, he was also speaking to himself of his coming death and his resurrection.

When he was asked the question very soon before the cross, what's the greatest commandment? And Jesus had to think, love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength, your neighbor as yourself.

He was answering the question, but he was also speaking to himself and applying God's command to his own heart.

[8 : 21] Jesus, do you love the Lord your God with all your heart? Do you love your neighbor to lay down your life for him?

All these words that Jesus spoke never viewed them simply as teaching. They are also the words granted by the Father that Jesus would never forget that he spoke.

and that would actually shape his own life, his own ministry and his journey to the cross. That's what the Father provided for him on the journey to Gethsemane, that teaching.

But the Father also provided certain events that would lead to this Gethsemane Valley. For example, the Transfiguration shortly after Jesus said that the Messiah will suffer and die, he then takes three of the disciples up on the mount that we call the Mount of Transfiguration, and he was changed on the outside, and it's not because he was in the presence of God that he was reflecting the glory of God.

He was radiating from the inside, and he knew it. Moses didn't know that he shone. Jesus knew that he shone, and Jesus never made himself shine.

[10 : 02] It was the Father who gave him that experience, and the people that spoke to him on that mountain, Moses and Elijah.

when he journeys on further, and he sees blind Bartimaeus, and blind Bartimaeus addresses him as Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.

He went on to have mercy, but he was reminded by the Father, that's who you are. You are Jesus, you are the Son of David.

As he rides in the triumphal entry, as we so call it, into Jerusalem, they're all out waving the flags. Everybody is celebrating, it would seem.

They're all praising him, Hosanna to the Son of David. Who brought them to sing that, to praise in such a way?

[11 : 06] It was the Father who prepared it. When he comes to the temple, and he sees that the temple has become so worldly, so man-centered, and Jesus is presented with a situation, what will he do?

Will he pass by? After all, he knows where he's going. Or will he deal with the temple? Will he cleanse the temple? Will he make a fuss?

Will he turn the tables upside down? Will he shout out, this house was meant to be a house of prayer, but you've made it a den of rubbish?

Will he utter these words? Yes, he will. Who wanted him to utter these words? It was the Father.

He prepared that so that he would express his concern for the worship of God. Then he was anointed by Mary.

[12:13] She anointed him, we're told, for his burial. Who told Mary to go there? Who told Mary to bring the oil?

Whether she knew it or not, it was the Father that provided it. And the Lord's Supper, the Lord's Supper, that last supper, was that just the idea of Jesus without any reference to the Father? Not at all. The Father is the one who organized the first Passover. And the Father is the one who organized the last supper that would become the Lord's Supper.

Father. And during that time, he, Jesus, says, take, this is my body. He took the cup, this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many.

The Father put him in a situation where he would speak these words. We'll be comforted by them tomorrow. Jesus was challenged by them when he uttered them.

[13:36] This is the Father giving him words to speak, placing these events in his path as he would come to Gethsemane.

And, you know, it's the same with us. you didn't arrive here tonight by accident. God has been preparing the way for your life and brought you here.

That's what he does. In ways that are way beyond our imagining, things that we cannot understand, threads that we will never be able to follow.

He brings us to where we are and we're able to look back and say, you brought me here, Ebenezer. Gethsemane and the provision or the providence of the Father.

Secondly, Gethsemane and the distress of Jesus. So, here's Jesus. He comes into the garden of Gethsemane and he's got the disciples with him there.

[14:52] Went to a place called Gethsemane. Then he says to the disciples, sit here while I pray. And the larger group of disciples sit there.

And then he takes three of these disciples, Peter, James and John, he took them with him and then he began to be greatly distressed and troubled.

And he said to them, my soul is very sorrowful even to death. Remain here and watch. He had spoken the words of the institution of the Lord's Supper, the Last Supper.

He knew his body would be broken. He knew his blood would be shed. It's not a secret. His mind was full of it. And yet when he comes into the Garden of Gethsemane, he doesn't for a moment say, well, I know what God's theology requires of me.

He doesn't say, it was God who brought me here, so let's dance our way through Gethsemane. I've already spoken the words about the broken body and the shed blood.

[16:02] Let's just get there. No, no, no. He came into the Garden of Gethsemane and he's in the greatest distress that he has ever been in in the whole of his existence as God the Son and as the God Man.

He has never, ever been in such distress as he is in the Garden of Gethsemane. If you are able to spot the words there, he was distressed, well, yes, greatly distressed.

the word actually is very close to the English. He was alarmed, danger. He didn't feel at ease, not for a moment.

He was troubled. He didn't feel comfortable. He felt all stirred up inside. He knew that there was something great ahead of him and it troubled him.

He wasn't calm, not in the slightest was he calm. And then he goes on and he says, my soul is very sorrowful, literally overwhelmed with sorrow.

[17:20] It's not just sorrow, it's sorrow that seems to threaten to drown him with its weight. It's enormous. And notice what it says, my soul is very sorrowful even to death.

And there in the Greek, it's pointing to death. The great distress, the alarm, the trouble, the overwhelming sorrow, and it's pointing straight there to death itself.

It was an intensely spiritual distress. awareness. He seems to have been aware of two things. He was aware of the hour and he was aware of the cup.

That's why he will go on to pray that the hour would pass from him and then he'll ask, remove this cup from me.

Awareness of the hour, the climax of his journey that would lead to his death at Calvary. This is an hour the clock has always been ticking in God's plan and there's no way around it.

[18 : 42] And part of this hour is that there will be a cup of suffering to drink and there is no one else in the whole world who can drink this cup but Jesus.

If you are reading in Hebrews 5 and verse 7, you would read that Jesus with loud cries and tears prayed the prayers we have here in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Loud cries. If you were in Gaelic, you'd be talking about Ranel. This is the kind of grief grief. That was so poignant.

Loud cries and tears. Now you might quite legitimately say, why? Why was he so afraid?

You may have watched 1917. You may have watched maybe you were one of them. You saw soldiers going to the front.

[19 : 48] death. Maybe you are well aware of people who face death with more courage than Jesus faced death. And maybe you're saying, why is Jesus, God's Son, making such a fuzz of all this?

Why is death such a troubling matter to him? And that's a very good question. question. It's a good question.

But you see, it wasn't just death. He himself said that he had come to give his life as a ransom for many.

He was to be the sin bearer for a redeemed human race. It wasn't just a death. death. If you were asked to stand before God for all of your sins, how awful that would be.

All your public sins already known, and all your private sins that nobody else knew, and you're going to stand in his presence, how awful that would be.

[21 : 11] But Jesus, he is standing before God in his death with every sin of his people, all their evil, all their wickedness, all their crimes, all their evil thoughts, every word that was sinful, everything, and he's got it all, and it's all on him, and he stands in the presence of God in death.

Of course, he's going to be distressed. It's not just death. He is identified with sinners in his death. at his baptism, he chose to be baptized in the waters of judgment for himself so that the people would experience the waters of washing in forgiveness for themselves.

He was identified in baptism. but that was leading to the cross itself. And it's at the cross, he will become what he never became before, the object of God's wrath.

Jesus was the lamb slain before the foundation of the world, but he wasn't the object of God's wrath. Jesus was the promised sin-bearer, but he wasn't the object of God's wrath.

[22 : 58] He becomes the object of God's wrath as he bears all of the sins of his people on Calvary.

And what you find here is that Gethsemane is the preparation for Calvary, and Calvary could never have happened without Gethsemane.

this is when it begins to weigh upon him like never before. He is the object of God's wrath.

He is going to face, and he knows it. He's been seeing Psalm 22 from his youth. So while in a few hours he will be saying these words from the cross, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

These were words that he knew would be true of him, but now they begin to be true of him, and he experiences this complete, entire, unmitigated alienation from God himself.

[24 : 16] He begins to feel the weight of it, already in Gethsemane. It's as if the darkness that would soon cover the earth on Calvary has already begun to penetrate his soul, this cosmic darkness in Gethsemane.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? that filled his thoughts in Gethsemane before Calvary.

The hour is here. Gethsemane has to be part of Calvary. They are twins, they can't be apart, and the sense of the weight of the hour becomes known to him.

You see, there are some people who are in the garden of Gethsemane. They'll walk back out.

They'll run. They'll be scattered in all directions, but not Jesus.

There's no detour for him, no bypass. He knows where he's going. The hour and the cup lie before him.

[25 : 38] And my point is this, who brought all these thoughts to Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane? Who allowed that great distress, that trouble, that spiritual overwhelming and sorrow to the point of death?

Who was it that opened his soul so that he would feel that weight? no one less than the Father and the Spirit of God.

Part of being equipped by the Spirit of God is not just to speak the words and do miracles. It's to experience what he alone could experience with the weight of this sorrow.

It's that the Spirit of God is allowing him to feel it all and the Father is the one who wills it. And notice this also.

It's not just that the Father made this known to him by the Spirit in the Garden of Gethsemane, but Jesus, so characteristic, doesn't keep it to himself.

[27 : 02] He speaks it out. He says it loud. That's why he took Peter, James, and John with him. Sit here and watch.

Remain here and watch. He could also have said, be there to listen. Be there to listen to this. And he said, notice, he said to them, my soul is sorrowful even to death.

all that he said was said in the presence of these disciples. Satan, of course.

Yes, if Jesus had listened to the voice of Peter, far be that from you, you're not going the way of the cross. Had Jesus listened to Peter, Gethsemane would be bypassed and there would be no journey to Calvary.

Satan always wants to derail from God's plan. He wants to derail Jesus' commitment, but he loses that.

[28 : 21] He cannot achieve it. Jesus experiences the distress to the fool in Gethsemane.

So, Gethsemane and the providence of the Father, Gethsemane and the distress of Jesus, Gethsemane and the prayer for deliverance. See, Calvary, Calvary where Jesus will lay down his life on the cross, the crucifixion, as we say, that will be a place of intense physical pain and intense spiritual pain.

But there's a sense in which Gethsemane is the place of even greater internal suffering and sorrow. Do you believe that?

There's a sense in which Gethsemane has greater sorrow for the Lord than even Calvary itself because Gethsemane is a place of choice.

It's a place where choices are made. It's a place where Calvary becomes a chosen path. death. But notice, he actually prays for deliverance.

[29 : 51] Going a little further, he fell on the ground and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He wants the hour to pass from him.

He doesn't want to go through the hour. He doesn't want that crushing weight. He doesn't want that sense of alienation from God.

He doesn't want to be the object of God's wrath. He doesn't want the crushing that goes with it. It's not what he says.

If it were possible that the hour might pass from him. He's even clearer in the next sentence.

Remove this cup from me, Abba, Father.

All things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Take it from me. It's all possible for you, Father.

[30 : 51] It's all possible. Last night we were preaching, with man it is impossible, but with God all things are possible. Jesus spoke these words, and knowing that one day in Gethsemane he'd be quoting, all things are possible for you, Father.

Abba, intimate. Some people call it the daddy word. That may trivialize it, but it is the father word. Jesus could quite rightly have spoken to God most high. He could have spoken to Adonai, Master. He could have called on Lord of hosts to take all of this away from him, but he doesn't.

He chooses the most intimate title, address possible for his relationship with God.

Abba, Abba, Father, will you keep me from this hour? Abba, Abba, Father, I know you love me.

[32 : 13] I know you care for me. It's all possible for you as one who cares for his son. Abba, Father, will you take this cup from me?

Was it wrong for Jesus to make these requests? I submit to you it would have been wrong not to make these requests.

Who wants hell? Who wants this cup of suffering in this hour?

nobody and certainly not the purest ever could want to be the object of God's wrath.

And it's right for him to say, take it from me. But please notice this. Jesus is not saying, I'm not going to go through with it.

[33 : 25] I'm not going to take the cup. I am going to leave. No, no. He addresses Abba and he says, Father, if the hour might pass from him, I won't walk away from it.

But could it pass from me? And Father, the cup, will you take it away, Father? If you give it to me, I'll take it.

But will you take it away, Father? Keep me from this hour of suffering, Abba. Take this cup of suffering from me, Abba.

All things are possible for you, Abba. It's for you. It's not a question of what's possible for me in Gethsemane.

It's what's possible for you, Father. And that's what fills his heart and his mind. And he prays for deliverance.

[34 : 29] He prays for deliverance to Abba. With loud cries and tears, he prayed to be saved from death.

And he wasn't wrong to do it. And if, as we shall see, he will go on to the hour and take the cup, he'll be doing it.

And you know what will be filling his mind? It won't be the Lord of hosts. It won't be God the Master Adonai. It'll be Abba.

Abba will fill his mind on the cross. Abba. Abba. And that's where he learns the dearest word for him, Abba, in the distress in Gethsemane before he experiences the cup that his own dear Abba will give him to drink.

Gethsemane and the prayer for deliverance. Finally, Gethsemane and the place of submission.

Jesus, in a sense, has been here before, maybe in a smaller rehearsal.

[35 : 58] Remember when he was in the wilderness and the temptations came from Satan. Who planned that, by the way? The Spirit thrust him out into the wilderness.

Who told the Spirit to thrust him out? The Father. And who did he meet in the wilderness? The devil. And what did the devil do? Encourage him to go to the hour, to go and take the cup of suffering, to go to the cross.

No, no, no, no. You're hungry? Make your own decisions in life. Feed yourself. Put your father into a difficult situation.

Jump and make him catch you. Always, always trying to keep Jesus from putting his father first. just worship me.

I'll give you all the glory now. Forget your father. No. Jesus didn't in the wilderness give in to that temptation. Even as they were coming into Jerusalem, some of his own people, some of his own disciples, they're planning the banqueting table.

[37 : 04] They want to sit on his right and on his left. Do you know how easy it would have been for Jesus to have become the earthly king in Jerusalem? That greater than Solomon is here.

That was a temptation. James and John's mother added to that temptation, but he didn't buy it.

He didn't buy into that at all. No. I have a baptism to be baptized with. You're looking for places of glory at the banqueting table.

My mind is filled with a baptism, waters of judgment. That's what fills my mind, and that's the choice that I take. But now that he's in the Garden of Gethsemane, it's even more open, and it's a matter of recorded prayer.

And how does Jesus use this prayer? prayer? How do you use prayer indeed? Do you use prayer to challenge God's will? To change God's will?

[38 : 18] Or do you use prayer the way Jesus did in Gethsemane? To align his will with God's will? That's what he does in prayer here.

He wants to align his will with God's will. He wants to will God's will with the whole of his will.

One hundred percent. How costly for the Christian? Much more costly for Jesus. And you know this, and we'll explore this a little tomorrow, Calvary was a choice.

Remember the words that Jesus said to his would-be followers, if anyone wishes to follow me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me.

What's the first stage there? It's not self-denial. It's not taking up the cross, it's not following. It's the first part, if anyone wishes.

[39 : 27] what do you want? What do you choose? What do you will? If you will, then deny yourself.

Then take up your cross, then follow me. It's about choices. And why will Jesus end up in Calvary after Gethsemane?

It's because he chooses. And that's what he says here. Remove this cup from me. All things are possible for you. Abba. But not what I will, but what you will.

So when he takes that cup finally, and bear this in mind, please, he will only take this cup once. And there's no cup like it.

He will take it from the hands of Abba. The loving hand of Abba. Abba. Someone who loved him and loves him from all eternity.

[40 : 33] He's the one who will give him this cup to drink and make him the object of his own wrath. Abba, Father, all things are possible for you.

could you take this cup from me? And Abba says, I will take this cup from you after you have drunk it.

Jesus, with loud cries and tears, prayed to be saved from death and he was heard.

He was heard. What do I mean by that? Where is Jesus? Is he still the object of God's wrath? Is he still in hell? No. No. No. He drank the cup and then he was saved.

[41 : 51] He rose. Abba raised him from the dead. He didn't keep him from the suffering. Didn't keep him from the hour. Didn't take the cup out of his hands before he drank it.

But the suffering did come to an end. And with whom does Jesus live now? He lives with Abba. Abba. And you see, if you're a Christian, this becomes your journey. You don't have the hour to go through.

you. You don't have the cup to drink. But boy, you have Abba as your father because he gave himself for your sins.

All things are possible for you, father. He knew that. And the father did what was possible.

[42 : 58] he allowed his son to suffer for his people, to plunge into the darkness and wrath and then raised him from the dead.

all things are possible for you. May the Lord bless his word. Let's pray. Our heavenly father, as we bow before you, we knew we were on holy ground.

We sometimes fear as we ponder these things. We speak from the outside. You spoke from the inside.

Take away anything, Lord, that is inaccurate, but fill our mind with that which is true, so that we will be able to honour you, Abba, in Jesus.

Amen. Let's now close our service by singing from Psalm 124 in the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 124.

[44 : 13] 124. The second version, page 418. Psalm 124, verses 1 to 8. Now Israel may say in that truly, if that the Lord had not our cause maintained, but he did.

If that the Lord had not our rights sustained, but he did. when cruel men against us furiously rose up in wrath to make of us their prey, they all, the hordes of hell, wanted to destroy Jesus on the cross, but like a bird out of the fowlish snare, he escaped.

He's risen from the dead, and the same is true of all the Lord's people. Let's sing these verses to God's praise. Now Israel may say unnaturally if that the Lord had not her cause maintained, if that the Lord had not her righteousness stayed, when cruel men against us furiously rose up in to make of us death great.

then certainly they had given us all, and swallowed quick for hope that we could deem.

Such was their rage death. As we might well esteem, and us fierce blood before them all things dry, so have they brought her soul to death white down.

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