**BIBLE STUDY 2 – GETHSEMANE PRAYER**

**Luke 22: 39-46**

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The ‘Devotion’ section of The Song Book of The Salvation Army (song numbers 563 to 635) includes some challenging lines. They are challenging because they are ‘all in’ – there are no buts or maybes, no ‘please, send someone else’. Rather, there are real and raw expressions of love and longing to be, and do, all that Jesus is calling us to be, and do, for him.

Consider the following lines: ‘My heart is thine, now thee obeying,/ Speak all thy will, dear Lord, to me’ (SASB 589); ‘Make thy demands on me; I’ll not refuse’ (SASB 600); ‘My all is in the Master’s hands/ For him to bless and break’ (SASB 610). Such words can spill from our lips before we’ve had the opportunity to stop and think and wonder if we really mean the words we sing.

As we look again at the prayer that Jesus said in Gethsemane, let’s stop, think and wonder whether we really could pray it: ‘But no matter what, your will must be mine’ (Luke 22:42 *The Passion Translation*).

QUESTION

* To what extent are we willing to say the words Jesus said in Gethsemane and pray that prayer?

Throughout his life and ministry, Jesus encouraged and challenged people to understand the significance of doing God’s will. When people asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, his response included the words ‘your will be done’ (Matthew 6:10).

When the disciples were debriefing after Jesus’ encounter with a Samaritan woman, Jesus made one thing clear: ‘My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work’ (John 4:34).

When Jesus was teaching on the Bread of Life in response to a request for a miracle – when he had just fed more than 5,000 people – he confirmed what he was here to do: ‘For I have come down from Heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me’ (John 6:38).

QUESTIONS

* If you have a clear sense of God’s will for your life, what is it?
* If not, how might you discern it?

The Gethsemane prayer came at the end of a draining week, with the mess and stress of the events in Jerusalem. With our perspective today we call it Holy Week. I wonder what Jesus would have called it?

Towards the end of that week, our study passage finds Jesus alone, on his knees in a garden. Some of his friends are nearby but he is on his own and is talking to God. He knows what God’s will is. He wonders if there’s any other way but recognises that this isn’t a moment of negotiation. Scripture tells us that Jesus was ‘in anguish’ (v44). As we peer into this Gethsemane prayer, we see something of the agony of someone struggling with the will of God.

QUESTION

* In what ways do you struggle with the will of God?

In the middle of the stress and struggle of this prayer, we see Jesus being strengthened by an angel (see v43). We’re not given any more details of the dark-night encounter. However, we know for certain that Jesus was able to get up and get on with the business of doing his Father’s will.

I wonder if you have ever had a moment when you’ve felt strengthened and encouraged to get up and get on with God’s will for your life. I wonder what helped you move forward in that moment. Was it an angel, a verse of Scripture, an encounter with the Holy Spirit, a word of encouragement or challenge from another person, a line of a song, a piece of art or a piece of music?

I wonder if you’ve ever felt stuck in Gethsemane – stuck in that place of struggle and anguish – caught between knowing what God is asking you to do and feeling unable to get up and get on with doing it.

QUESTION

* As you reflect on these moments where you see Jesus on his knees in prayer, how willing are you to follow his example?

‘Be the change’ is the Candidates Unit strapline that has inspired many people to respond to the call of God to spiritual leadership. The theme for this year’s Candidates Sunday (16 May) is ‘Be Willing’.

Let’s be willing to allow God to help us. Let’s be willing to strengthen and encourage each other to do God’s will. Let’s be willing to say and mean: ‘But no matter what, your will must be mine.’