

WINNING THE BATTLE ON OUR KNEES
March 20, 2016 morning service
Luke 22:39-46

Take your Bible and go to the book of Luke chapter 22. We'll be there this morning. He is risen. Amen. He is risen indeed. No other faith, religious context has within it a resurrection save the Christian gospel. It is what makes us hopeful, alive, and true. I read on Sunday morning this year through the prayers of Spurgeon that he prayed at his church. This morning the prayer I read, I underlined several lines but one he prayed. He prayed this out loud in church in London. "Lord Jesus, cause the spirits of the Mohammedans to wane into the darkness." Lord. Somebody would shoot you for praying that today. He knew that was a false religion, that there was no resurrection and the seed of what had been planted in his beloved England all but rules the day there now. O God, cause us to lift high, so high, so powerful the name of Christ that no other faith, no other false pseudo doctrine would take root in our culture. God help the church.

Well we need to pray and so we're going to pray. Tonight we're going to pray. Now listen to me. I need you to be here tonight, 6:00 in this room, joining hands as a co-host with Pace Assembly of God and Pastor Joey Rogers and many others that are coming to join us here at 6:00. I know many of you do not return on Sunday evening normally but I encourage you to be here tonight. Come early because I'm expecting that there will be a throng of people in this room tonight. We're going to pray through the Lord's Prayer. We're going to sing praises unto the Father. We're going to get on our knees. We're going to be on our feet. We'll lift our hands and we'll get silent before the Lord. We will be decent and in order but we will give praise unto our great God tonight. We believe. "If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray and turn from their wicked ways," He's going to hear from heaven and forgive our sins and heal our land.

So tonight we're going to pray, a prayer meeting, a community prayer meeting. I'm asking you to come. If I could make you be here, I would. If I could mark you off the roll if you didn't come tonight if you didn't have an excuse, I'd do it. That's not the way we do church. That's not who we are but I'm asking you to come and be here. There'll be a place for children over in the gym. Brother Dennis has got a great time for our up through 5th graders and the preschool area will be open. We'll gather in here, middle school and up and we're going to seek the face of the Lord God. Don't miss it tonight. We are going to win the battle on our knees. That's what I'm preaching about this morning on this Palm Sunday as we focus our mind on Gethsemane as our Lord was getting ready to walk toward the cross. On this Palm Sunday we remember.

We are in Luke's gospel chapter 22 and before I get to my text in verse 39 I want you, if you've got your Bible open, just to look back down at verse 31. Here's what the Lord said preceding this gathering in Gethsemane.

“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail.”¹

Amen. Simon, the wicked one wants permission to sift you like wheat but I've prayed for you. Ladies and Gentlemen, I am telling you that there is a wicked warfare in our culture in America today in the church and the wicked one is sifting us like wheat. There is a warfare like nothing I've ever seen. Jesus has prayed for us and what has He prayed? That our faith may not fail. There's a spiritual battle and the key weapon is prayer. There's a battle for your soul today. Pray. There's a battle for your family. Pray. There's a battle for your children. Pray. There's a battle for your church. Pray. There's a battle for your city. Pray. There's a battle for our nation. Pray. Pray. Pray. Get up and pray. Ask for God's mercy and ask for His favor.

The greatest prayer warrior that the world has ever known was Jesus the Nazarene. When He was baptized, He prayed. At his first public ministry in Capernaum, He prayed. Before He fed 5000, He prayed. Before He opened deaf ears, He prayed. Before He raised Lazarus from the dead, He prayed. Before He had the Passover supper, He prayed. Before He went to the cross and while He was on the cross, He prayed. After He was raised from the dead, He prayed for the Spirit of God to come on His believers and according to Hebrews 7:25, right now He sits at the right hand of the Father making intercession for you. He is praying even today. He's the greatest prayer warrior. If Jesus needed to pray, I'm telling you, you need to learn to pray. If our Lord was a prayer warrior, oh how much more should we learn to pray. He gives us a glimpse into His prayer life in Luke's gospel chapter 22 in our text of the morning. Beginning in verse 39 He's come to Gethsemane with His followers and the word of God says:

And He came out and proceeded as was His custom to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him. When He arrived at the place, He said to them [Look at this. Here's how He taught them.], “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.” [I'm telling you, that prayer right there is loaded.] And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and began to pray, saying, “Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done.” Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground. When He rose from prayer, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping from sorrow, and said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray [Say those words with me. Get up and pray. One more time. Get up and pray] that you may not enter into temptation.”

They've come to Gethsemane. This passage really does not even need an exegesis. My soul. As a matter of fact, it is so sacred when you read this, I almost feel like I do damage to even comment on what we've just read. The exposition is just in front of us but there are two or three things as we dig into it that may not appear as

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clear on the surface as they are underneath the text and I want us just to dig into it for just a moment today, knowing that I am more than inadequate to deal with my Lord's prayer life.

There are two things I would say to you in this text today. First of all is the instruction of Jesus on prayer. He instructs His disciples. They come to the Mount of Olives. If you've ever been to the Holy Land you've been to that place where those old Olive trees, hundreds and hundreds of years old are there, that place where our Lord prayed, and He told them. Here was the instruction, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." What a prayer. Have you prayed that lately? You ought to pray this for yourself. Pray that you may not enter into temptation. Now think about the word that's there. When we say it, here's what we think. Okay, Lord, I'm going to pray and so I kneel down and I say, "Lord, I don't want to enter into temptation."

That's a good prayer to pray but now think of that phrase this way, "Pray" comma. When you're praying you don't enter temptation. You see, the greatest way to avoid temptation is to pray. Pray and you won't enter temptation. You say, "Pastor, I can't pray all the time." Well the Bible says to pray without ceasing. I've told ya'll several times. I've shared with several students this week. When I sit right here on Sunday and Jon's leading, some of the greatest experiences I have is watching the face of the minister of music that you can't see. It is really classic sometimes. It was this morning. He was telling somebody to go up there and get it a while ago. I don't know who was supposed to go up there but somebody was supposed to go up there. It wasn't me, alright?

But while they sing, I'm praying and I'm praying one phrase, "Lord, I believe in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Lord, I believe in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Fill me, Holy Spirit of God. I believe in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. God, I don't even know. I just want to get dead to me. I'm prepared. I know what I think I'm going to say but, God, if you need to move something out of that and put something else in, Spirit of the Living God, just take over what I'm going to do in these next few minutes. If I'm not even supposed to talk then, God, just interrupt. I just believe in the ministry of the Spirit of the Living God."

So we're to pray always. You say, "Pastor, can you preach and pray at the same time?" I don't always but sometimes I do. Just within my Spirit, I'm praying for some of you even now. When I know there's somebody in the room I've tried to lead to Christ and it looks like they're right on the edge, I'm preaching and trying to pray. It's almost like I'm psychotic. I've got two personalities. I'm preaching over here and praying over yonder.

Do you understand the power of prayer to keep you out of temptation? You ought to pray, "O God, keep me from temptation." What was the temptation that Jesus was talking about to these disciples right here? They're in the garden. I believe that what Jesus was praying for them and telling them to pray, I believe the greatest temptation of the disciples in that very minute was cowardice and flight, that they were

going to turn their back on Jesus and become cowards and run from the cross that was coming. I pray today that none of you will be a coward and that you won't flee from the spiritual battle. I'm telling you, friend, victory is already out. Hallelujah.

I've had scores of you follow us on Twitter and Facebook and know what we did when Jon and I tried to get to Liberty this last week. Oh we had us a time. They canceled our first flight at 11:00 and put us on a 6:00 and then they were going to fly us to Charlotte and we got halfway to Charlotte and Columbia, South Carolina and they put us on the ground and said they didn't have enough gas. Who gets in a plane going to Charlotte and you don't put enough gas in it? Well they had to divert around a little storm and I got all that. So I told Jon, I said, "We're fixin' to pull into Love's Truck Stop up here, I think."

So they put us on the ground. I looked for Steve Spurrier but he wasn't there. So an hour later we got on the deal and we got to Charlotte just in time to stand and watch our plane for five minutes and then drive off without us and that was midnight. So I'm standing in the Charlotte airport with my son and my minister of music and we've got to find somewhere to spend the night and come back and get on the plane the next morning.

Pray that you may not enter into temptation. So I called and they got us on the next flight. We were walking down the hall and old Brandon, we met Brandon. Brandon works for the people at the Charlotte airport. He's got on a big, yellow vest, about the color of a Baylor Bears basketball uniform, and bright. I said, "Ask that boy right there." He turned around. He said, "How can I help you?" I said, "We're stranded. I've never been here. I don't know where a hotel is. I've got to spend the night. I've got to get these guys back on a plane tomorrow. I don't know what to do." He whipped out his phone. He said, "Where do you want to stay?" He called and got me a hotel room. He said, "Do you want a ride?" I said, "I don't know how to get there." He said, "Let me get you a ride over there." That old boy just took care of us just like he was there to be the butler for the Olive Baptist Church staff.

So we tipped him and then we had a gospel presentation. Old Brandon tells me he knows the Lord. So we met a brother in Christ. We went up and talked and did all our stuff and flew back. We got to Charlotte getting ready to come back to Pensacola and our flight was of course delayed. I looked up and here came Bennett, my boy, walking down the middle of that concourse with his arm around guess who? There's old Brandon. "Well, preacher, I see that you and American Airlines are having another wonderful encounter on a Wednesday afternoon."

Now what do you do in the middle of all that? Let me tell you, it really helps you to go up to the counter and beat on that and cuss. It really helps you to cuss and beat. It may make you feel better but now that church member that's sitting in that same plane that we got off of, they're watching to see how their pastor's going to react. Yes, sir. That's just a silly little illustration of temptation. You know, you can lose your

witness that quick. You better pray in the middle of that mess that you don't fall into temptation.

I have never in all of my life beat the counter of an airline but one time in my life. I did once. I did in Paris, France. I was flying with two guys to go to Russia on a mission trip. We were coming back and the guys were not even Delta medallion people and they put them in first class and they left me in the back. I asked that woman, I said, "Give me one good reason that I should be in your medallion club and these two yahoos that I'm traveling with ain't even signed up and you're going to put them up in the front with peanuts and me in the back." And I beat on the counter. I felt good about myself. I flew in first class on the way home but boy that was awful. I lost it.

Do you ever lose it? Do you ever lose it? What do you do? You repent in Jesus' name. But isn't it a lot better if God just gives you grace through the storm and that you pray pre-sin rather than post-sin? Amen. Do you believe you can have victory? I'm telling you, Jesus, through the Holy Ghost will give you victory if you'll learn to pray and not enter into temptation. You've got to learn to pray. It's the only thing the disciples ever asked the Lord to teach them. They said, "Lord, teach us to pray." Why? Because they had watched him over and over and over and over and over and over and pray and overcome temptation and they knew what He had they needed.

Dear friend, if you'll read about your Lord the way He prayed, you need to learn to pray and when you do, that'll instruct you to pray before so that you'll not enter into temptation. There are grown men in this room that have got a pornography problem. I'm telling you, you better learn to pray on this side of clicking that thing. There are folks in this room on the verge of losing your home, your marriage, your job because of some dastardly relationship. You better learn to pray on the front side of that rather than the back side. That's Jesus' instruction. Boys, pray that you'll not enter into temptation. That was His instruction. Do not run but kneel and pray. Do not be a coward and turn from the war but kneel and pray.

We see His instruction but now secondly, very quickly I want you to see not only the instruction of Jesus on prayer but I want you to see the practice of Jesus on prayer. Look at it. He told them what to pray and He left and He went to verse 41. It says, "He withdrew from them about a stone's throw." He went alone and He knelt down. Number two, He knelt and He began to pray. Certainly He asked for relief. "Father, if You're willing, remove this cup from me." But then He prayed, "O God, not My will but Yours be done." Some of you, you never pray until the hard times come. It's very difficult to pray in hard times if you've not prayed in good. But when you know the Lord in good times it's easier to pray in the hard. The question always comes, "When I pray I've got cancer. That's a hard time. What do I do?" "I've just walked through a divorce and I pray. What do I do?" "I've prayed and yet they died anyway. What do I do?"

Some of you are sitting in this room and you've got a son or a daughter who's a prodigal today. You've prayed for them and yet it doesn't look like they're coming back home. They just keep going farther and farther into taller weeds and into deeper sin

and you've prayed and prayed and prayed. Let me tell you, friend, when you learn to walk by faith in the hard times – and there's a lot of hard times. Anybody that tells you that you can just pray and name it and claim it, I'd run from them like a snake on a children's playground. I'm here to tell you, you can't tell God what to do. You can cry out to Him and sometimes God heals, sometimes He doesn't. Sometimes marriages make it and sometimes they do not. There are times that people are called home to heaven and sometimes they are left here. There are times that prodigals die in the field. There are other times that prodigals get right and return home.

Dear friend, you need to pray. I want you to look and see in this text in verse 43. The Bible says after He prayed, "Not My will, not My will, it's not what I want. It's what God wants." In the hard times, I pray, "O God, I want Your will." An angel from heaven appeared and why did he come? To give Him strength, to strengthen. Jesus is praying, "God, if this cup." Have you ever looked in that cup? The disciples said, "We can drink that cup." That was the cup of death. That was the cup of your atonement. That was the cup of substitution that Jesus was going to drink, that poisoned cup of death He's going to drink. "Lord, let this cup, but, Lord, if it can't be, I'll drink it. Lord, not My will, Yours be done." God sent an angel and it strengthened Him.

You know, when this world will look at you different is when you've got strength in the storm, not when you've got everything rosy and high. When you're walking in the storm, God gives you strength. He is the God of angel armies and He sent one to Jesus. Those angels strengthened Him. The Bible says as He continued the pray, His sweat became like drops of blood. There's a lot of medical doctors that have looked at this and there's a big, old, long medical term for it. When the blood came out of the pores of his skin and dropped to the ground, His sweat mixed with His blood. Such agony. You ever agonize in prayer?

I was with a momma and daddy this week. They were as brokenhearted as I've ever seen over their prodigal. That daddy's shoulders heaved. These are faithful, godly people. These are folks a part of this church. I mean these are foundation stones yet their boy will walk away. They're heaving. I looked down in the carpet. Their tears, they're not bloody and their sweat's not bloody but I'm telling you, the carpet is just beginning to be matted wet.

I'm telling you, I don't know what that prodigal's going to do but I can tell you this. I believe the Lord sent part of the angel army to gather up that brokenhearted momma and daddy and rather than cursing God and running from the church they said, "We're going to stay on the solid rock and we're going to believe God." He sent angels to Him and He prayed for them and He prayed for Peter saying, "I've prayed for you and what I've prayed, Peter, is that your faith fail not." Peter was about to deny the Lord and He's praying that his faith fail not. Peter is about to go through some of the hardest times in his life. He's praying that his faith fail not.

It's easy sometimes just to give up. Just quit. Well what do quitters get? Nothing. The people that pursue us in agony in their prayer. Let me tell you, God's

watching. He is. It says, "He shows Himself strong on behalf of those that humble themselves and pray." God's watching Olive. I believe He's watching what we're going to do tonight. You don't strong arm God, get His arm up behind Him.

I've been reading in the book of Deuteronomy all month long and God said to Israel, "You were on the top and now you're on the bottom and the reason you're there is because you disobeyed me." He said, "You used to be first and now you're last." He said, "If you want to be first rather than last, you obey Me." If He finds his church in disobedience, that that is first becomes last. That one that's on top gets on the bottom."

I'm telling you, when you repent toward God, He in His sovereignty moves us from the bottom to the top and takes us from the back to the front. That's His favor that He shows. God wants good for Olive Baptist Church. God wants good for you. He's waiting for you to lift your cup and say, "O God, I'm going to trust you." Dear friend, the battle's won on your knees. It's won when you begin to cry out, "O God, O God, O God."

What prayers should we pray? Well there are five of them. I just want to mention these one, two, three, four, five. Then I'm going to give an invitation. I'm going to ask some of you to come today. Some of you have never been saved. You ought to come. Some of you have never been baptized. You ought to come. There are some men in this room that have never prayed with your wife and you need to come right down here without her and make your commitment and say, "Lord, I will pray."

I've got a young couple in this church right now that came to my office. I'd never seen them so busted up and broken. I'm telling you, they were on the brink. They were on the razor's edge of divorce. They came to my office and I'm here to tell you, she all but had the papers in her back pocket. I asked that old boy – she said, "I'm willing to try." I said, "Would you pray with your wife?" He did it in my office. I said, "I want you to pray with her every day." Now when I'm standing out here at the door, when he walks in, he walks in with his shoulders kind of up. You can tell the burden's been lifted. He'll take me by the hand and say, "Pastor, it's day 67." I'm telling you, it'll make a Baptist shout and say Glory to God. Amen. Day 72. Amen. Of what? "I've prayed with her every day." God sent an angel of His angel armies and He strengthens us for the journey. You mean it doesn't get hard? Lord God, no. Some days it's hard but it's hard things that God does.

I've never been as encouraged. I put it on Facebook the other day. One of our dear deacon men, Jon's brother, it's public knowledge. That little baby boy born. That little boy's been sick. His momma posted and said, "We're going to trust God. God's not dead and He's going to get us through." Then she used that phrase. She said, "It's in the hard times that God's at His best." I never have turned a cartwheel but if I could have turned one, I'd have done it right there. I guarantee you. Then ya'll could have prayed for me because I would have a broken neck. I said, "Lord, just in my heart I'm going to turn a cartwheel right here in Jesus' name." Alright? Man, there was a shout in my soul. Why? Because I saw it. I saw it. I saw deep faith rising up in the middle of

the storm. I said, "God, that's the kind of people you can build this church on right there." They're not going to quit nor quiver. Stay the course.

What do we need to pray today? Let me just give you five prayers to pray. You ought to jot these down. You ought to pray them sometime this week. Come tonight. You can pray them tonight. You're going to have time. Number one, you ought to pray a prayer of surrender. Lord, not my will but Yours be done. Lord, I surrender. I surrender. I give up. I give You my life. Some of you have given 90% and you keep holding on. Billy Graham writes that little book about the closet in your house. He says God comes to visit and you pick up all the mess you can and you take it back to that closet and you throw it in, shut the door and lock the door, and you say, "Lord, come in. You can have everything but, Holy Ghost of God, don't look in that closet." You know where the Spirit of God goes as soon as He walks in your house? He walks in there because He knows what's in there. I'm here to tell you, you're none of His until you're all of His. You've got to open that back door and say, "God, here's all the stuff I'm ashamed of, I give that. It's surrender." You give everything in surrender.

Number two. You need to pray the prayer of thanksgiving. I'm telling you, God's blessed us immensely. We are having, listen, we are having the greatest budget year of giving in the history of 120 years of Olive Baptist Church. I mean, it's the greatest year we've ever had unless you don't give anything today and next Sunday. Then we're going to be in trouble. I know we gave a little because I gave mine. But we're on a record pace. We ought to thank God for that. Amen. The building money's coming. The easiest thing we do around here is write a check. God's been good to us. We ought to thank Him for it.

Number three. Not only do you pray a prayer of surrender, a prayer of thanksgiving, you ought to pray a prayer of repentance. When you find sin in your life, you ought to cry out, "O God, forgive me." We can't turn and go the other direction. Amen.

Number four. You ought to pray a prayer of obedience, obedience unto God. Some of you have never been baptized. You've been saved but you've never been baptized. You need to pray the prayer of obedience and that it'll be answered when you walk in that water. You ought to obey God. Some of you have never joined this church. You ought to join it today. You ought to walk right down here and you ought to join this church. Some of you, God's called you to ministry to be a preacher of the gospel and you've got to obey God. You need to obey Him. Some of you, God's called to go on a mission trip. You say, "I've never been on one before." You need to obey God.

Hey, I was just kind of funning with you a while ago but I'm here to tell you, God'll call you to go work down there in that nursery and help some young people. If the Spirit of God put that on your heart, you better get yourself down there. If you know what to do, you better do it because rank, known, obstinate disobedience sets you up for the judgment of God. God'll take you to the woodshed. If you've ever been to God's

woodshed once, you don't want to go back again. Oh no. I've been worn out several times. I want to stay out of that.

Last Sunday I wasn't here. I was at Pisgah Baptist Church. I sat in church with my mother and father. That's the first time I've done that in 20 years I guess. I surprised momma and took her for her 85th birthday out for lunch. We got done with church and the pastor, Brother Terry, he said, "We're glad to have Dr. Traylor here today. Why don't you come lead us in our closing prayer? Say anything you want to this church." I thanked them for leading me to Jesus when I was ten years old. I thanked Ms. Obera for confirming my call to preach.

When I was a little boy at 12, I went to the altar several Sunday nights. When I was 17, I announced my call to preach. She came to me and she said, "Young man, five years ago God told me He was going to call you to preach." I said, "Why didn't you tell me?" She said, "Listen, if you can't hear God call you to preach, you'll quit the first time it gets hot in the kitchen." She said, "I'm just here to confirm what you heard is what God said."

They had a little praise band. Most of the people in that church are 65, 70, 80, older but they've got a youth movement going on. The old people are letting the young people lead. I said, "Thank God for that. They're being obedient to the new generation." Boy that church blessed me and we are blessing others but we'll only be a blessing when we get obedient to God.

We ought to pray a prayer of surrender, thanksgiving, repentance, of obedience and some of you need to pray a prayer we call salvation's prayer. Some people call it the sinner's prayer. It's just a prayer of, "God, save me." God, save me. God, save me.

Last week I watched a funeral. I've never watched a funeral online before but I watched Sam Cathey's funeral online, one of the greatest evangelists Southern Baptists have ever known. He died and went to heaven and they had his funeral. I watched old Brother Sam's funeral. I was in the Birmingham Civic Center the night Sam Cathey preached and assigned Elvis Presley to hell. He was never invited back. I thought he got over the line a little bit with what he did but I'm telling you, he was hot-hearted for God. Boy he would preach. Then they asked this question. They said, "Everybody in this room that Brother Sam led to the lord, you got saved while he was preaching, stand up." People just started standing up. I said, "Glory to God."

He'd lead them right up to that time and he'd say, "Prayer this prayer. Lord, thank you for loving me. I've sinned. Come into my life. Forgive me of my sins. Take me to heaven when I die. In Jesus' name. Amen." Some of you need to pray that prayer this morning. You say, "I wouldn't know how." Then walk right down here and take me by the hand. I'm here to tell you, God'll do a good work.

Now look in your Bible. The Bible says after Jesus had prayed and the angel came, He went back and He found the disciples and they were what? They were asleep. What's that phrase? I had you say it twice out loud. He said to them, "Get up and pray." Let's just let this half of the church say, "Get up" and this half over here say, "Pray." Alright? He said to them, "Get up, pray. Get up, pray, Get up, pray." Get up and pray. Olive Baptist Church, get up and pray. Wake up and pray. Get up and pray. Get up and pray.

Father, stir us up. Teach us. Show us. God, forgive us when we go to sleep at the offering. Help us wake up and get up and pray. Lord, for that couple that ought to be a part, draw them. For that person that ought to be saved, draw them. For that one that needs to come with a burden and just fall in the altar, draw them. We love you, in Jesus' name.

We're on our feet all over this room. Jon's going to sing an old gospel song that says, "I surrender all." If you're coming today, coming to surrender, coming to join, coming for baptism, coming to pray for your family, you step out. We're singing two stanzas just for you, these two stanzas just for you. Out of that balcony, come. Right now, come. Right now, come. You may have a burden and just need to come lay it at the altar, then come. You come. You come. That's it. Just now. Come bring your burden.