

## **Second Lenten Service**

### **Lenten Theme: O Sacred Head Now Wounded**

#### **Text: Matthew 26:36-46 (NIV)**

<sup>36</sup>Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." <sup>37</sup>He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. <sup>38</sup>Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." <sup>39</sup>Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." <sup>40</sup>Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. <sup>41</sup>"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." <sup>42</sup>He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done." <sup>43</sup>When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. <sup>44</sup>So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing. <sup>45</sup>Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour is near, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. <sup>46</sup>Rise, let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

#### ***Theme: The Wound of Apathy***

In the last few weeks there have been several examples in the news of people who have been apathetic to warnings from other people. There was the very tragic case of the girl who died of a drug overdose in Whitefish Bay. I wonder how many people warned her about the dangers of drugs. I wonder how many people warned the young man who gave them to her throughout the years. There were probably several warnings at some time to all of the people who were involved. They apparently went in one ear and out the other, and a great tragedy occurred.

Then on Tuesday I read the article about the family that has lost three infants because they were not sleeping in safe places. Again I would think that they would have been told that this was not wise, but apparently they did not listen. Another child lost her life.

When I think of people who have gotten in serious trouble, it has seldom been without warning. The problem is that the warnings go in one ear and out the other. People become apathetic about the warnings until it is too late.

That is what happened to the disciples in our text. Jesus told them again and again to watch and pray, but they didn't heed the warnings. Tonight we will look at how our apathy is another wound that Jesus bears.

#### **I. Jesus often warns us to watch and pray.**

When Jesus came to Gethsemane, He told His disciples to watch and pray with Him. He didn't encourage them to do it just once. He told them to watch and pray three times. But He didn't just tell them to watch and pray when they came to Gethsemane. Throughout His ministry He told them that He was going to be betrayed into the hands of sinful men. They would kill Him, but after three days, He would rise from the dead. Sometimes the disciples were hostile to this idea and told Him that this

will never happen to Him. Other times they were confused, but they didn't bother to ask what he meant. But during Holy Week the Lord especially began to encourage the disciples to watch. In Matthew 24 He said, *"Watch out that no one deceives you."* (4) *"Keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come."* (42). He also tells the parable of the 10 virgins in Matthew 25 and ends that parable by saying again, *"Keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour."* Then at the last supper, Jesus told the disciples, *"This very night you will all fall away on account of Me."* Peter answered, *"Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will."* Then Jesus told Peter that before the rooster crows, he will deny his Lord three times.

Those warnings to watch also apply to us. As Christians we are called to watch that we do not love the things of this world more than our Lord. We are called to watch for temptation, and pray that we will not fall into it. We are called to watch out that we do not fall into despair in hard times, but that we look to Christ. Paul also tells us in Romans 13, *"The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. <sup>12</sup>The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. <sup>13</sup>Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. <sup>14</sup>Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature."*

II. But so often we fail to watch and pray.

Just like the disciples we fall asleep. Imagine this scene. Jesus told the disciples, *"My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and watch with Me."* Then He began to struggle with the temptation of going another way than the cross. He watched for that temptation. He struggled with it. He prayed to His Father. In the end He said, *"May Your will be done."* In contrast the disciples kept falling asleep. He kept waking them up and encouraging them to watch. Something very bad was about to happen, but it was like they didn't care.

Those disciples are a picture of us in our faith. How often have we not been told that we should not love the things of this world and that the love of money is the root of all evil. Yet, it goes in one ear and out the other. We love the things of this world. We covet them. We want more. So often God's Word, His Sacraments, and the eternal treasures that He promises in heaven play second fiddle to the things that we want now. Other times it is the sinful pleasures of this world that we have our minds on. We think about things that should be far from our thoughts and minds. The Bible warns us to look out for those temptations and to flee them, but we can't stop thinking about them. Before you know it, we fall into them. Then there are the sorrows that we have. Sometimes our eyes are so focused on our sorrows and fears, that we don't even look for the Lord and His help. We wouldn't even see it if it were right around the corner.

The disciples were sleeping while Jesus was struggling with sorrow and temptation. He has His eyes on the mission that His Father had given to Him. Jesus struggles to warn us in so many ways. His word is preached every Sunday. He sends Christian friends and family who are concerned for us. So often we don't even care. We wish that they would go away and let us sleep. Everything will be okay.

The biggest problem is that while we are sleeping, the devil is working overtime. These three disciples were sleeping while Judas was gathering the mob that would arrest Jesus. They were getting

their lamps, clubs, and swords all ready. In 1 Peter 5:8 Peter compares the devil to a lion who is prowling around, looking for someone to devour. It is just when we are sleeping, that danger enters as when Judas and the mob came to arrest Jesus. When we least expect it, the devil gets ready to pounce on us.

III. In His mercy Christ doesn't give up on us.

Three times Jesus got up from His prayer and He went to the disciples to wake them up. The disciples might have fallen asleep, but as Psalm 121 says, "*He who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.*" The disciples fell asleep, but Jesus spent much of the evening praying for them.

Just when we have fallen asleep toward the riches of this world, its temptation or its troubles, Christ calls out to us, "Wake up sleepyhead!" He calls us to repentance. We see that we have not been watching. We have been lazy and lukewarm. We have fallen into temptation rather than avoiding it. We have filled our hearts with sorrow rather than looking to Christ for strength and peace. We confess our laziness. We confess our apathy toward His commandments. We especially look to Him for forgiveness. He bore the wound of apathy. It was another one of our sins for which He gave His life on the cross. If Adam and Eve would have been watching out for temptation, Jesus would have never had to suffer and die on the cross. But they fell asleep. They didn't watch. They and all of us have fallen, but Jesus died to take away our sin of apathy too. He calls us to wake up and trust in His forgiveness. Then as His people, He encourages us not to keep falling into the same sins that devastate our lives. He calls us to watch and pray, that we may not fall into temptation. When through the power of the Holy Spirit we are able to keep watch, we find that we have much more happiness, peace, and hope in our lives.

Could you not watch and pray? That is what Jesus asked the disciples. It is also His question to us when our eyes are not focused on His Word, both His commands and His promises. May God give us those eyes to watch for the tricks of the devil that we will not bring great tragedy on ourselves, and when we do fall asleep, may His word wake us up to repent and watch and pray as we long for His return.

Amen.

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