

Can You Not Watch One Hour

Matthew 26:37-46 ³⁷ And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. ³⁸ Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.” ³⁹ He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.” ⁴⁰ Then He came to the disciples and found them asleep, and said to Peter, “What? Could you not watch with Me one hour? ⁴¹ “Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” ⁴² Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.” ⁴³ And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. ⁴⁵ Then He came to His disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ “Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.”

“Can you not watch and pray with me for one hour?”

I think most of us would have to answer, “No. I can’t watch and pray for one hour.” We have trouble watching and praying for five minutes, much less an hour.

When we were in Sem I remember hearing Martin Luther’s advice for preaching. “Stand up, speak up and shut up.”

The third point means that when you said what you need to stay, stop talking. Don’t keep talking just to fill the time. Keep the sermon short. Some of you might agree keep the sermon short. But remember that when Martin Luther said keep the sermon short he meant one hour. If a sermon is 20 minutes we think its too long. We have trouble paying attention to a 20 minute sermon much less an hour of prayer.

So the answer is clearly no we can’t watch and pray for an hour. And yet it is so important that we do.

What does Jesus say, “lest you enter into temptation?”

Why is it so important? So that we do not fall into temptation. You want to become like Judas, who sold Jesus for 30 pieces of silver? You want to become like Cain who murdered his brother? You want to fall into temptation? If not, Jesus says learn how to watch and pray.

Waiting and watching often feels like a waste of time. When someone is late we might get angry and tell them, “you wasted my time, you know what I could have been doing instead of waiting for you.”

Waiting and watching seems like a waste of time but sometimes it is the most important thing we can do.

Kaylee was taken by ambulance to the hospital in Berlin Monday night. I rode with her in the ambulance. You know what my job was? Nothing, sit there and do nothing. It was important for me to be there in the ambulance. It was important for Kaylee to see me. It was important for Vanessa to know I was with Kaylee. It was important in case the EMTs had any questions. But it was also important that I not get in the way. It was important that I be there but also important that I sit and do nothing, unless they had a question.

We act the same way about watching and praying with Jesus.

We think, "What a waste of time."

But Jesus assures us it is not, it is one of the most important things we can do. To sit and watch and pray with Jesus. It is one of the most important things we can do and yet we fail at it completely.

When Jesus comes back he finds them asleep. All three of them are sleeping, yet Jesus addresses Peter specifically. "Peter, 'could you not watch and pray with me.'" Why only Peter? What about James and John?

Peter is the one who said, "even if all these others stumble I will not."

Peter was the one who told Jesus I will stand with you to the death. Yet he could not even stand with Jesus for one hour of prayer. How are you going to stand with Jesus for your life, through deadly battles, if you cannot stand with Him for one hour of prayer?

When a cop pulls someone over for speeding they always ask, "Do you know how fast you were going?" Which is better the man who is unaware and not in control, or the guy who is purposely breaking the law? The answer is they are both breaking the law.

Which is better those who like Peter say "I'm going to stand with you till the end Jesus," but can't even stand with Jesus for one hour of prayer, or those who say "I know I won't make it I'm not going to try?" The answer both are sinners.

We are always one or the other. We are always either the arrogant self-assured Peter confidently proclaiming the strength of my faith, but not even making it for one hour of prayer. Or we are the lazy John, thinking I can't and I'm not going to try. Either way we are failures, sinners.

When Jesus said "Peter, 'can't you watch for one hour?'" it wasn't a demand that we learn to pray for one hour, although that might be a good idea. It was a call for us to acknowledge our sin and repent and learn to rely on Jesus strength and not our own.

When Jesus finds the men asleep the second time He returns and He prays for them. Ultimately it doesn't matter that we can't watch and pray for one hour because Jesus watches for us.

Do you know what Jesus prayed that night? Matthew doesn't tell us but John does.

John 17:9 NKJ ⁹ "I pray for them . . . John 17:14 NKJ ¹⁴ "I have given them Your word . . . John 17:17 NKJ ¹⁷ "Sanctify them by Your truth . . . John 17:20-21 NKJ ²⁰ "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those

who will believe in Me through their word; ²¹ "that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You;

Can you watch and pray with Jesus for one hour. No I cannot but Jesus watches and prays for me. He is my good shepherd who watches over me.

When the soldiers came soldiers came Jesus told his disciples, "It is enough," even though they had done nothing it was enough because He did it for them and for us.

Sometimes the most important thing you can do is wait and watch, right now Jesus watches over you.

Amen