TUESDAY

OPEN

It’s not easy. You’re going through a difficult time and you wonder if you’re going to survive because you’re being pressed out. You are just, it is almost too much pressure. You know what the will of God is, but you find it hard. You find it difficult. O Beloved, what are you going to do? Well we have lessons for you from the life of Jesus, from His time in the Garden of Gethsemane.

PART ONE

I’m in the Garden of Gethsemane here in Jerusalem, and you can hear the city coming awake and going about its business. This is where Jesus came, Beloved, on the night on which He was betrayed. He came here to do business with God, and what happened in this garden determined all the things that would follow. (See Matthew 26:36-43) Beloved, as we look at Matthew chapter 26, I want you to know that God has a message for you
today, and that message has to do with the will of God and being pressed out. First I want us to go to Matthew chapter 26. In Matthew chapter 26, in verse 30 it says, “After singing a hymn…,” and this is in the Upper Room, “…they went out to the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them, ‘You will all fall away because of Me this night, for it is written, ‘I will strike down the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered.’ ” (Matthew 26:30-31) As He says this, what He’s doing again is quoting the Scripture. He’s quoting a very significant scripture that we find in the book of Zechariah. It’s a very interesting scripture and I want us to look at it for just a minute, and I want you to go to Zechariah chapter 13. Zechariah is the second to last book in the Old Testament, and in the second to last book we have this prophecy. In verse seven it says, “‘Awake, O Sword, against My Shepherd…against the man, My Associate,’ declares the Lord of hosts. ‘Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered; and I will turn My hand against the little ones.’” (Zechariah 13:7) And then what He does is, He jumps millenniums to yet something that has to be fulfilled in the future. But we stop there, because this is where the battle was won, was in the Garden of Gethsemane. And when you learn the principles, the precepts of what happened in this garden, then you, Beloved, will know how to win the battle. How to win the battle when you are being pressed out, because the word “Gethsemane,” the way we say it, is really “Gath-semene,” and it means “the place of the olive press.” I’m in the midst of olive trees. This is where Jesus would come. This is where they were making olive oil. This is where they take the olives and they would crush the olives, and the first oil that came out was the virgin olive oil. It was the best of the olive oil, and so Jesus is in a place where He is going to be pressed out. It says, “But after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.” (Matthew 26:32) He’s going back to the Galilee. He’s going back to the place where He called them, most of them, where He met them, where His public ministry was. So although He tells them that they are going to be scattered like sheep, He tells
them also that He will meet them again after He has been raised. In other words, yes, the [Shepherd is going to be struck down and the sheep are going to be scattered, but the Shepherd is going to be raised from the dead] and the sheep are going to be gathered back to the Shepherd.

(PARAPHRASE, Matthew 26:3, 32) “But Peter said to Him, ‘Even though all may fall away because of You, I [I] will never fall away.”

(Matthew 26:33) And you know what? He meant it. He meant it from the depths of his being, and in all probability at one time in your life you have said, “Lord, I will never do that. I vow I will never do that.” And yet you found yourself doing it. You found yourself, and was there hope afterwards? Yes. And what could have prevented your doing it? Well this is what we’ll see. “[And] Jesus said to him, ‘Truly I say to you…this very night….’”

(Matthew 26:34) Now it’s morning and you hear the trucks and you hear the cars and you hear the bustle of the people, and even as I stand in this garden, the priest is behind me, in the garden walking, and he reminded me, this is a place of prayer. This is not a tourist place. He’s let me into his private garden. This is a place of prayer. “[And] Jesus said to him, ‘Truly I say to you…this very night, before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’ [And] Peter said…‘Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You….’” (Matthew 26:34-35) And then you have to understand, and many times we miss this, and it says, “…[And] all the disciples said the same thing….”

(Matthew 26:35) Now how many disciples are there now? Well, remember, Judas has left the supper. Judas has gone out to betray Jesus. So there are only eleven with him for a while in this garden, the twelfth is coming and we’ll see what happens. “Then Jesus came…to [the] place called Gethsemane and said to His disciples, ‘Sit here while I go over there and pray…,’ sit here and I’m going to go over there and pray.

(Matthew 26:36) “And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and [He] began to be grieved…,” grieved, “…and distressed.”

(Matthew 26:37) And I want you to understand this grief of His heart. It
says, “[And] then He said to them, ‘My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death….’” He says, “…Remain here and keep watch with Me.” (Matthew 26:38) He says, “I am so grieved that I am about to die and I want you to stay here and I want you to keep watch with Me.” What I want you to do, Beloved, as I stand in this gorgeous, beautiful garden, a place of prayer, I want you to know and to understand the agony of this place, the utter agony of this place, utter hell of what Jesus was going through. He couldn’t have been in a more appropriate place than in an olive press—an olive press where He is about to be crushed. “And He went a little beyond them and fell on His face and prayed, saying…‘Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.’” (Matthew 26:39) “God, I’m asking You, is it possible? Is there another way? Will You let this cup pass from me? And yet, not My will, but Thy will.” “And He came to [His] disciples and [He] found them sleeping, and [He] said to Peter, ‘So, you men could not keep watch with me for one hour?’” (Matthew 26:40) It’s so significant, isn’t it? That here is Jesus who is doing the work of God, and He needs the support of those who are with Him, those who are His followers. It just shows you the importance of prayer for the work of God. Yes, God is sovereign. Yes, He’s omnipotent. And yet, here is God in the flesh, bidding disciples to watch and pray with Him for just one hour, and He has to wake them up. Does God have to wake you up? I know, Precious One, that He has convicted me that I do not pray enough, that I am to walk in a constant attitude of prayer. (See 1 Thessalonians 5:17) And I find myself, many times, being drawn back and thinking of the Lord. But sometimes I find myself getting up out of bed and my first thought is not God. My first thought is simply getting up, and I want to get up, and many times I roll over on my face on the bed to pray, to begin my day that way. So He says, “Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Matthew 26:41) Now what is He saying here? And it’s so important, and the other gospel
does not tell us, it does not take us through the process that Matthew takes us through. The process of one time, two times, three times, saying, **“Keep watching and praying….”** Now when He says, **“Keep watching and praying…,”** it’s in the present tense. *(Matthew 26:41)* It’s to be a habit of life. We have to be vigilant. Why? Because, as you hear, the world is all around me. I’m in a secluded garden where there is a lock on the door, where I had to get permission from the Catholic father to come in, here at the Garden of the Church of All Nations, and be able to cut this program for you. And yet in all of this, what do you hear? You hear the bustle of the sound of the world outside. When you step out of the garden you’re into the world. When you come away from your private place, you are stepping into a place of temptation. You are stepping into a place of testing. How are you going to make it when the pressures of the world come upon you? When they begin to press you out, Beloved, how are you going to make it? Well he tells us, **“Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation….”** *(Matthew 26:41)* Remember, in the Lord’s Prayer that we studied in Matthew chapter 6, where you pray, **“Lead [me] not into temptation, but deliver [me] from evil…,”** or deliver me from the evil one? *(Matthew 6:13, KJV)* And so once again, He says, [“You are to watch and you are to pray that you enter not into temptation.”] *(PARAPHRASE, Matthew 26:41)* Why? And He tells you, **“...The spirit is willing...,”** the spirit is willing, **“...but the flesh is weak.”** *(Matthew 26:41)* Now, let’s go on, **“[And] He went away again a second time and prayed, saying ‘My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done.’ ”** *(Matthew 26:42)* “If it can’t pass away unless I do it, and I’m asking if there’s another way, I want You to know that I want Your will above all.” Now remember, He’s in agony. Remember, He is deeply grieved. As a matter of fact, Luke the physician, in his gospel, tells us, because he’s the physician, that Jesus Christ was in such agony, He was in such torment of soul and of spirit that as He was praying, drops of blood, great sweat and
drops of blood, came out on His forehead and was dropping to the ground. (See Luke 22:42) What was going on? Well, Beloved, we’re going to look at it in just a minute.

PART TWO
Welcome back, Beloved, to the hustling, bustling sounds of the city of Jerusalem. I’m in a secluded garden, and yet you can hear the sounds of life all around me. It was for this people that Jesus was in agony. He was in agony for the people of all the nations. He was in such agony here, in the Garden of Gethsemane. Remember the olive press, that as He was pressed out in prayer, as He was deeply grieved about what was awaiting Him, He was in such agony that He began to sweat, as I said, great drops of blood. (See Luke 22:42) The body is designed to faint when it’s under pressure, but when it doesn’t the pressure builds up in the head, and then those capillaries begin to break and the blood begins to come out. Jesus was in such agony that they were not small beads of perspiration, but rather, Luke tells us, that those great drops of sweat, like blood, were falling to the ground. (See Luke 22:42) As I sit in this garden and I see the red poppies scattered all over, it’s kind of, in a sense, a symbol to me of the agony of this garden, of the battle that was won here, through prayer and through an overwhelming passion, an overwhelming desire to do the will of God no matter the cost. Well we saw that He prayed a second time. And it says in verse 43, “Again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. And He left them again, and went away and prayed a third time….” (Matthew 26:43-44) Now you want to mark the word “prayer” because you want to see what you can learn from marking prayer. You want to see here that he didn’t pray once, He didn’t pray it twice, but he prayed it three times. “Keep on watching and praying….” (Matthew 26:41) Remember in Matthew chapter 7, at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, it was “ask” and it was “knock” and it was “seek”? And it says, “keep on asking,” “keep on knocking,” keep on
seeking.” (See Matthew 7:7-8) Beloved, sometimes it just has to be a persistence of life, and so what He’s showing us is here is God in the flesh, here is the Son of Man, here is the one, as Matthew showed us, who came “….to give His life a ransom for many…,” (Matthew 20:28) to lay down His life. (See 1 John 3:16) He knows what’s been awaiting Him. He’s known it since the time before He left heaven, before He was confined to the womb of Mary. Before He was born, He knew that He was born to die, and yet, knowing all that, He is praying. Three times He goes to the Father. Three times what He tells Him is this: “This is what I would like. I would like another way, but Thy will be done.” (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 26:39, 42) He then says, “…[He] prayed [the] third time, saying the same thing once more. Then He came to the disciples and said to them, ‘Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand…,’ ” (Matthew 26:44-45,) and you want to mark that time phrase: the hour is at hand. This is what He came for. “…The hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.” (Matthew 26:45) Can you imagine the agony? One who followed you for about three and a half years, one who has seen you do all these miracles, one who has seen over and over again that He was the Son of God, and yet he is betraying Jesus at the hand of sinners. He says, “Get up, [and] let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand! [And] while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, came up accompanied by a large crowd with swords and clubs, who came from the chief priests and [the] elders of the people.” (Matthew 26:46-47) This is illegal. They are about to arrest Him for an illegal trial. They have Roman soldiers behind them. They’re coming with swords, they’re coming with clubs. “Now he who was betraying Him gave them a sign, saying, ‘Whomever I kiss, He is the one; seize Him.’ [And] immediately Judas went [up] to Jesus and said, ‘Hail, Rabbi!’…,” (Matthew 26:48-49) and then he leaned down and he gave Him a kiss. “And Jesus said to him, ‘Friend, do what you have come for.’ Then they
came [to Him] and laid hands on Jesus and seized Him. And behold, one of those who were with Jesus reached and drew...his sword, and...cut off [the] ear...,” of one of the slaves “...of the high priest....” (Matthew 26:50-51) We don’t know who it is in this gospel, but John is going to later tell us that it was Peter. Peter, the one that was prepared to die with Jesus, the one that said, “Even though I have to die, I will not deny you.” (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 26:33) He was ready to fight. “[And then Jesus said to him, ‘Put your sword back into its place; for all those who [live by] the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and he will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?’” (Matthew 26:52-53) “Do you think that I’m impotent? Don’t you know that all of heaven is at My bidding? Don’t you know that I could call twelve legions of angels? And they could wipe out everyone.” But this is not why He came. He was born to die. It was in a garden, the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus agonized and agonized over the will of God, but won the victory. He won the victory. He says, “How then will the Scriptures be fulfilled, which say that it must happen this way?” (Matthew 26:54) We know from the Old Testament that Jesus was going to be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver. The Old Testament tells us this. (See Zechariah 11:13) The Scripture must be fulfilled in this way. “[And] at that time Jesus said to the crowds, ‘Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me as you would against a robber? Every day I used to sit in the temple teaching and you did not seize me.’ ” (Matthew 26:55) “Why have you come with clubs? Why have you come with swords?” He says, “But all [these things had] taken place to fulfill the Scriptures of the prophets....” And it says, “...Then all the disciples left Him and fled.” (Matthew 26:56) They went away. Jesus was seized. He was taken away. The gospel tells us that He was tied together, and they took Him away—a band of chief priests and elders following Him—and His disciples fled. Why? Beloved, listen, this is your precept for life. This is your
lesson for today, because they did not keep watching, because they did not keep praying, because although they said, “We will die with you.” Not only Peter said it, but all of the other ten said it. The other ten said it. (See Matthew 26:35) And they said it, and they meant it, but they didn’t keep watching and they didn’t keep praying, and they didn’t remember that “…the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Matthew 26:41) What is God’s lesson for you and me as I sit here in the Garden of Get-se-ma-ne? “Gat-se-ma-ne” the olive press? It is this: That you and I are going to encounter great trials. We are going to be put in places of temptation and we need to remember that we need to keep praying and keep watching and keep praying until we have the victory. Until we are willing to say, “…Not my will, but Thine be done...,” and mean it, and do it. You never hear the disciples saying, “…Not my will, but Thine be done.” (Luke 22:42, KJV) You hear them saying, “I’m willing to die with You,” but you don’t see them recognizing the weakness of their flesh. O Beloved, in this garden that Jesus turned into a sanctuary of prayer, you and I need to remember that day by day we need to pray: “…Lead us not into temptation….,” (Matthew 6:13) We need to keep watching, we need to keep praying, we need to remember: “…The spirit is willing, but the flesh is week.” (Matthew 26:41) And yet, we can overcome the flesh, Beloved, we can overcome the flesh if we will watch and pray.