

LEADERTREKS **SERMON SERIES****MARK OF A DISCIPLE**

Disciples of Christ turn to prayer during their most difficult moments.

SCRIPTURE

MARK 14:32–42

SERMON OVERVIEW

Today we are starting the first lesson in our Easter series. When Jesus faced the most challenging situation of his life, he chose to do two things—pray and obey. It was through his prayer that he expressed and chose to obey the Father regardless of how hard his situation was. This example shows that we, too, should turn to prayer during our most difficult moments. One key takeaway from this lesson is that prayer often helps us obey God, especially when life is hard or when he asks us to do something hard.

OPENING**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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GAME AND ICE BREAKER QUESTION

- We recommend **Where My Peeps At?** or another screen game from **Deep Discipleship Games**.
- How do you prepare to do something that scares you?

MESSAGE

Use the following teaching points and suggested illustrations as a starting point to build your message.

READ MARK 14:32–35**POINT 1: Jesus prayed during his darkest moments**

While Jesus displayed his incomprehensible love for us on the cross, he wasn't excited to be executed. He didn't look forward to the cross. In the moments before his arrest and trial, Jesus was "distressed," "troubled," and "very sorrowful, even to death" (vv. 33–34). And during the most difficult time of Christ's life on earth, he turned to his Father.

ILLUSTRATION: Tell a **personal story** about a difficult time in your life and turning to your father (or someone else who loves you) for help. Or, if you have kids, talk about a time they came to you when they were scared or in trouble.

The world we live in is a broken place filled with broken people. Life will be a struggle at times. During our most difficult moments, turning to our heavenly Father in prayer is the best thing we can do.

READ MARK 14:36, 39**POINT 2: Jesus submitted to his Father's will through prayer**

More than once, Jesus asked God to provide an alternative to the cross—"remove this cup from me" (v. 36). These probably weren't calm, controlled prayers asking for relief but loud cries filled with tears (Heb. 5:7). He was so overwhelmed with agony about the looming cross, that he began to sweat blood (Luke 22:44). But through his prayers, his conversations with God, Jesus surrendered to the Father's will in obedience.

It's easy to ask God the Father to do or give us what we want, and that's not a bad thing. God, like all good fathers, wants us to come to him with our hearts' desires (Ps. 37:4, Matt. 7:7-11). But how often do we spend our prayers asking God what he wants or what he wants us to do? Like Jesus, we should ask God for what we want but ultimately seek his will and desires over our own.

READ MARK 14:37-38**POINT 3: Prayer protects us**

When Jesus found his best friends asleep instead of praying, he reminded them of the importance of prayer. We see here that prayer isn't simply a "good thing" to do but a means of keeping us inside of God's will. When our humanity gets in the way of us following Christ (temptation, weariness, fear, etc.), prayer protects us from straying.

ILLUSTRATION: Tell a **personal story** about an experience you've had in a vehicle that has the "lane assist" feature. When you start to venture outside the lines of your lane, the lane assist technology moves the car back to where it needs to be.

The same way that lane assist recenters a car, prayer can move us back to where God desires us to be. Talking to God refocuses us on who he is and who he wants us to be.

CLOSING REFLECTION

Use this prompt to wrap up your message and leave your students with a challenge to apply.

- How would you describe your prayer life?
- What can you do to strengthen your prayer life?

GROUP DISCUSSION

Pick a few questions from below to discuss. Close with prayer.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What do you typically do when you know something very hard is about to happen in your life?
- How does prayer help you obey God, especially when it's hard?
- What stands out to you when you read what Jesus prayed in this passage?
- What kinds of emotions do you think Jesus felt as he prayed?
- How can you model Jesus' prayer when you're facing a hard situation?
- What do you think the benefits to prayer are?
- How do you think prayer can protect us?
- What is something in your life God is telling you to do that you need his help to carry out?
- How could prayer help you obey God when he is telling you to do something hard or even scary?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- Identify something God is telling you to do or a command from his Word you need to obey. Pray about that thing with a Christ-following friend and ask God to help you obey him. Ask your friend to keep you accountable to follow through.

PRAYER

Close by praying or invite someone to pray for your group.
Use this space to keep track of any prayer requests.

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