



Willing

Jesus willingly submitted to the Father's redemptive plan.

LUKE 22:41-53

MEMORY VERSE: LUKE 22:42

STUDY Luke 22:41-53, noting the emotions expressed by Jesus. Prepare by asking yourself the following question: *How do these emotions point to Jesus' trust in the Father regardless of what Jesus faced?* (PSG, p. 83)

CREATE a teaching plan for your group using the ideas on pages 100-102. Focus on helping the group identify examples of Jesus' willingness to submit to the Father's redemptive plan. Consider using a teaching approach you have yet to use this quarter. (See p. 102 for ideas.)

GATHER the following items:

- Personal Study Guides (PSGs) for each group member

Prepare to display:

- Pack Item 2** (*Outline of Luke*)
- Pack Item 4** (*Poster: Jesus' Trials*)

Make copies of:

- Pack Item 7** (*Handout: Luke Time Line*)
- Pack Item 8** (*Handout: Memory Verses Bookmark*)

CONSULT *QuickSource* for additional questions to use during the group time and review the *Explore the Bible Adult Commentary* for additional biblical insights (available for purchase from LifeWay.com).

REINFORCE the session by sharing by email with the group when you trusted God during a challenging time. Reflect on how knowing God has a plan affected the way you faced your situation.

FIRST THOUGHTS

KEY DOCTRINE

God

To God we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience (Deut. 6:4-5).

Life can be hard, even when we are doing what we are supposed to be doing. Job pressures, health issues, and dealing with family relationships can make life a challenge. Even representing Christ in this world can be a challenge when we are moved out of our comfort zones. In each of these situations we are called on to trust God, knowing He has a plan. In today's lesson we see Jesus express trust in the Father while carrying out God's redemptive plan.

(In PSG, p. 82) **What situations challenge your willingness to trust God?**

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

BIBLE SKILL

Use a Bible concordance

Use a Bible concordance to identify passages that reference powers of darkness. Review some of the passages, including Colossians 1:13. Record insights gained by reviewing the passages identified. What are the limits of Satan's dark rule?

LUKE 22:39-53

After observing the Passover meal and instituting the Lord's Supper, Jesus spoke with the disciples at length and prayed for them (John 14–17). He led the group from the upper room and away from the city. They crossed the Kidron Valley and returned to the Mount of Olives, where Jesus spent several evenings during this week. The garden of Gethsemane was a special place where Jesus and the disciples often resorted for prayer (Mark 14:32).

Jesus wanted to be alone while He prayed. Leaving the disciples to watch, He went a bit further to pray. Interestingly, He instructed them to pray so they might not enter temptation. He did not tell them to pray for Him but for themselves. Before the night was over, they would face severe testing. Not just once, but three times Jesus prayed and returned to find the disciples sleeping (Mark 14:33–42). He rebuked them for not being able to watch with Him during this critical hour.

As He prayed, Jesus honestly expressed Himself to the Father concerning the ordeal that awaited Him. We need to remember that while Jesus was perfectly God, He was also perfectly human. He always was willing to follow the Father's plan (Phil. 2:6–8).

Jesus' prayer was so intense that great drops of sweat like blood dripped from His brow. Still, Jesus was willing to embrace the Father's plan. It was not possible for Him to avoid the cross. He who was without sin was about to take our sin on Himself and die in our place (2 Cor. 5:21).

As Jesus woke the disciples, Judas arrived with a band of soldiers and authorities. Jesus had invited Judas into His inner circle even though He knew Judas would betray Him. Judas departed from the upper room after the Passover. Now he came to complete the conspiracy for which he received the price of a slave—30 pieces of silver—fulfilling prophecy

(Matt. 26:15; Zech. 11:12). Kissing Jesus' cheek in feigned greeting, Judas indicated which one the soldiers were to arrest.

At first, the other disciples tried to defend Jesus. Peter drew a sword and cut an ear off of the servant of the high priest (John 18:10). Jesus healed the servant and then challenged the mob. As He was arrested, the disciples ran away (Matt. 26:56). Their professed loyalty vanished before the torches of the soldiers.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

IN PRAYER (LUKE 22:41-46)

Verses 41-42

On this night, ahead of His crucifixion, Jesus wanted to spend time with the Father. Gethsemane was a walled garden where He often went to pray and to meet with His disciples (John 18:1-2). Its quiet familiarity lent itself to focused time in prayer. After the Passover meal, Jesus led the disciples back to this retreat. Eight of the disciples sat in one place while Jesus took Peter, James, and John farther into the garden (Mark 14:33-35). Jesus told the disciples to pray as He went a short distance away and prayed.

Three aspects of this setting draw our attention. First, Jesus **withdrew from them about a stone's throw**. The intensity of this moment required an element of solitude, but Jesus also wanted to be close to these men. They had been with Him through an amazing three years, and here, hours before the cross, Jesus desired their presence. Second, Jesus **knelt down**. The posture of prayer is important. By kneeling, Jesus took a position of submission before the Father. Third, Jesus **began to pray**. The verb tense indicates an ongoing prayer. He prayed at length with deep intensity.

Jesus addressed His prayers to the **Father**. Neither the form nor the fact of Jesus' prayers should be understood in a way that subordinates Him. Although He and the Father are co-equal, co-existent, and co-eternal, in His humanity Jesus humbled Himself and became obedient in every way (Phil. 2:8).

Jesus did not begin with His request, but with submission: **if you are willing**. This phrase does not mean Jesus did not already know the Father's will. In their united omniscience, Jesus and the Father were in constant communication. Jesus embraced the Father's will even before He offered His request.

Two, we should understand Jesus' prayer that the Father **take this cup away**. The *cup* was twofold. It certainly involved the suffering that lay before Him, but more importantly, it represented His taking on the sins of the world and dying for them. Scripture uses two theological terms to describe this act. *Propitiation* occurs when God's righteousness is satisfied (1 John 2:2). *Atonement* refers to our reconciliation to God through the blood of Christ (Rom. 5:11). Both words portray how and why Jesus absorbed the wrath of God for our sin.

VERSES 41-42

⁴¹ Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and began to pray, ⁴² "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me—nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done."

Third, Jesus submitted to the Father's will. The word *nevertheless* shows He offered His request while at the same time embracing the Father's plan. We should not misunderstand the phrase *not my will, but yours, be done*. Jesus' humanity was allowed complete expression in transparent, honest prayer. His final statement declared His acceptance of the Father's will.

Verses 43-46

VERSES 43-46

⁴³ Then an angel from heaven appeared to him, strengthening him.

⁴⁴ Being in anguish, he prayed more fervently, and his sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground.

⁴⁵ When he got up from prayer and came to the disciples, he found them sleeping, exhausted from their grief. ⁴⁶ "Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up and pray, so that you won't fall into temptation."

Jesus prayed so intensely that He became exhausted. As He prayed, *an angel from heaven appeared to him, strengthening him*. This was not the first time an angel supported Jesus during especially difficult circumstances. After Jesus' temptation by Satan following forty days of fasting, He was strengthened by angels (Matt. 4:11). The term *appeared* could mean the angel was already present but took form and ministered to Jesus.

It's difficult for us to imagine Jesus *being in anguish*. It challenges our concept of Him as the omnipotent God. The term *anguish* translates a word from which we get "agony." In this instance, Jesus' emotional and mental faculties were under assault by the pending passion of the cross. This battle caused Him to pray *more fervently*. This word means "stretched out." It not only speaks to the intensity of Jesus' prayer but also to its persistence.

Jesus' concentration was so powerful that *his sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground*. This phrase includes the word from which we get *thrombosis*—a reference to blood clots. We should not be surprised that Doctor Luke used medical terminology to describe Jesus' experience. Some writers have tried to explain this phenomenon medically, arguing that under intense stress the capillaries in the brow could burst and mingle with the sweat. However, Luke did not say that Jesus actually sweated blood but that His sweat was *like* drops of blood as it fell from His head. The image portrays the fervor of Jesus' prayer.

Luke focused primarily on the main issue at hand, which was Jesus' interactions with the Father and with His *sleeping* disciples. Other Gospel accounts include three seasons of prayer (Mark 14:32-42; Matt. 26:44). Jesus was willing to accept the Father's answer to His prayers. The phrase *when he got up from prayer* suggests more than merely rising from His kneeling position. It conveys the idea of finality. He had no more reason to wrestle in prayer. He had the Father's answer and embraced it.

Jesus *came to the disciples*. Walking to where He had left them, Jesus *found them sleeping*. He had urged them to remain watchful but their bodies betrayed them. Jesus observed that their spirits were willing but their flesh was weak (Mark 14:38). They were *exhausted from their grief*. This refers to a mental and emotional state of distress. Emotional stress is more debilitating than physical exertion. They had heard Jesus speak of His impending suffering and their hearts were troubled (John 14:1).

Waking the disciples, Jesus asked, *Why are you sleeping?* They must have still been lying on the ground since He told them to *get up and pray*. This was no time to slumber. Jesus did not tell them to pray for Him but for themselves, that they would not *fall into temptation*. He had given this same instruction when they first arrived at Gethsemane (Luke 22:40). Jesus reminded them why prayer was so important. Often, we only think

of temptations in terms of desires. In this instance, their temptation came upon the arrival of the force sent to arrest Jesus.

Believers should willingly submit to God's plans. In His omniscience, the Father knows what is best for us and what glorifies Himself. Because He is our heavenly Father, we can trust that He not only knows but desires what helps us fulfill His plans for our lives. We demonstrate our trust in Him by embracing His will in everything.

What causes you to struggle with God's will? What aspects of God's character encourage you to trust and obey Him?

IN BETRAYAL (LUKE 22:47-50)

Verses 47-48

Jesus was *still speaking* when *a mob came*. The group included chief priests and elders, along with temple guards since the Romans had not become involved yet (v. 52). The mob appeared *suddenly*. They must have stalked quietly through the garden, trying to catch Jesus unaware but not understanding that He knew exactly what was about to happen.

With the mob was *Judas*. Luke specifically identified Judas as *one of the Twelve*. He was chosen to be part of Jesus' apostles. Jesus had invested him with authority not only over the group's small funds but with the gospel message. Judas shared the remarkable experience of preaching the good news and healing the sick (Luke 9:1-6). In spite of his privileged role, Judas had conspired with the chief priests to betray Jesus into their hands.

Judas not only accompanied the mob but was *leading* them. Judas chose this place and time, knowing Jesus would be isolated. The Jewish authorities had not acted against Him previously because they feared the multitudes of people who were constantly around Jesus in the city (20:19). Here in the garden, removed from the crowds of supporters, Jesus could be taken with a minimum of difficulty.

As Jesus and the disciples watched the group approach, Judas *came near Jesus to kiss him*. In this culture, friends typically greeted one another with a kiss on one or both cheeks. Judas' action not only identified Jesus to the soldiers who were to arrest Him but also fulfilled the prophecy that the Messiah would be betrayed by a friend (Zech. 13:6-8).

Jesus understood exactly what was happening. He confronted Judas not only for the fact that he was *betraying the Son of Man* but that he was doing so *with a kiss*. Jesus employed the title *Son of Man* to emphasize that Judas was not just betraying someone who had befriended him. Judas was being disloyal to the Messiah, the promised and Anointed One. Jesus' statement also revealed He knew exactly what Judas was doing.

VERSES 47-48

⁴⁷ While he was still speaking, suddenly a mob came, and one of the Twelve named Judas was leading them. He came near Jesus to kiss him, ⁴⁸ but Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"

VERSES 49-50

⁴⁹ When those around him saw what was going to happen, they asked, “Lord, should we strike with the sword?” ⁵⁰ Then one of them struck the high priest’s servant and cut off his right ear.

Verses 49-50

The phrase **those around him** refer to the eleven disciples who had accompanied Jesus to the garden. They **saw what was going to happen**. Seeing the mob, along with the soldiers and authorities, they understood Jesus was in danger. Not knowing what to do, they asked Jesus if they should **strike with the sword**.

In the upper room after the Passover meal, Jesus spoke about obtaining swords (Luke 22:35-38). His statement was not intended to send the disciples out to buy swords. He previously sent them out without extra clothes or money, but now the time had come when they needed to be prepared as He would be counted an outlaw. The disciples revealed they had swords.

Obviously, two disciples brought the weapons with them to the garden. They did not understand Jesus’ purposes. Their response was fleshly because they had not spent the evening in prayer. Consequently, they failed in this hour of temptation.

Jesus willingly submitted Himself to the Father, but the disciples were initially ready to fight. Luke did not specify which **one of them struck the high priest’s servant**, but John’s Gospel reveals Peter as the assailant. John also identified the name of the servant as Malchus (John 18:10). Earlier Peter boldly declared he would defend Jesus and even go to prison with Him (Luke 22:33). Ever the impulsive one, Peter did not wait to hear Jesus respond to the question about whether they should fight. He swung the sword and **cut off** the man’s **right ear**. Likely, Peter was not aiming for the ear but intended to take off the man’s head. If so and the man ducked, we can understand how the sword severed the ear.

Believers can stand with confidence when following God’s will. We do not have to adopt the world’s pattern of response to challenges, nor should we crouch in fear of the future. God will strengthen us even when we encounter severe persecution for His sake. The Lord will reveal how we should respond (Mark 13:11).

What would have been your reaction if you had been present when Jesus was betrayed? How does Jesus’ example guide us when we feel betrayed?

VERSE 51

⁵¹ But Jesus responded, “No more of this!” And touching his ear, he healed him.

IN ACTION (LUKE 22:51-53)

Verse 51

An already chaotic scene could have become disastrous after Peter cut off the ear of the high priest’s servant. Although the mob arrived armed, Peter’s use of a sword normally would have led to his arrest, if not worse. The entire group of disciples might have been attacked. Jesus stepped in and stopped escalating reactions with a word and an act. Jesus responded to Peter’s actions: **“No more of this!”** He went further to rebuke Peter’s use

of the weapon, saying that people who take up the sword will die by the sword (Matt. 26:52).

Words would not have stopped the authorities from retaliating against Peter. The servant was in pain as blood flowed from his wound. Jesus took action. He stepped forward and **touching his ear, he healed him**. This dramatic miracle halted further action as everyone would have been amazed.

Verses 52-53

Jesus addressed the **chief priests, temple police, and the elders who had come for him**. The term *elders* generally referred to the Sanhedrin, which was the ruling Jewish council that authorized Jesus' arrest. The *temple police* were used because this matter had not been discussed with the Roman authorities yet, so regular soldiers would not have been authorized.

Jesus' confrontation of these leaders revealed their cowardice. Why had they **come out with swords and clubs**? While Peter's use of a weapon may have momentarily justified their action, they arrived fully armed as if to put down an insurrection. Jesus pointed out that their methods suggested that He was some sort of **criminal**.

Jesus reminded them that they had plenty of opportunities to arrest Him. **Every day** He had been with them **in the temple**. They **never laid a hand** on Him in public. His statement impeached their honor and convicted them of cowardice.

At this point, Jesus yielded Himself into their hands. If He had not been willing to accept the Father's purpose, no force on earth could have compelled Him to the cross. Twelve legions (over 60,000) angels were poised at the edge of heaven to set Him free (Matt. 26:53).

The statement **this is your hour** referred to the appointed time when the forces of evil appeared to prevail. Jesus' comment about **the dominion of darkness** made it clear that He understood who was behind this atrocity. Satan had plotted against Him from the beginning. By all appearances, the devil was asserting his *dominion* yet was only deceiving himself. Satan had no authority over Christ. Nothing would happen here except by the will of God the Father.

We may think that the enemy is winning at times. If we yield to emotions, we could become discouraged and defeated. Nevertheless, we can willingly accept God's purpose knowing our heavenly Father loves us and will work all things for the good of those who love Him (Rom. 8:28).

What difficult action has God called you to undertake that would be impossible without Him? How do you demonstrate willingness to embrace God's will?

VERSES 52-53

⁵² Then Jesus said to the chief priests, temple police, and the elders who had come for him, "Have you come out with swords and clubs as if I were a criminal?"

⁵³ Every day while I was with you in the temple, you never laid a hand on me. But this is your hour—and the dominion of darkness."

LEAD GROUP BIBLE STUDY

FOCUS ATTENTION

RESPOND: Before the session, locate a large cup and small slips of paper and a pencil or pen. Begin the session by inviting the group to name life challenges (for example: illness, family issues, job pressures). As each challenge is listed, have a volunteer write it on a slip of paper and put it in the cup. Put the cup aside for use later in the session.

TRANSITION: Summarize the first paragraph on page 82 of the Personal Study Guide (PSG). Ask: ***What situations challenge your willingness to trust God?*** (PSG, p. 82) Explain that during challenging situations, we are called to trust God, knowing He has a plan. Say: *Today's session shows how Jesus expressed trust in the Father while carrying out God's redemptive plan.*

EXPLORE THE TEXT

SUMMARIZE: Recall last week's study about the Lord's Supper, during which Jesus discussed His impending death and warned that one of the disciples would betray Him. Use information from **Pack Item 2** (*Outline of Luke*) and **Pack Item 7** (*Handout: Luke Time Line*) to note that this session will cover the "Events of Jesus' final Passover" and the estimated dates for these events.

INTRODUCE: Use information in the PSG (p. 83) to explain the setting in the garden of Gethsemane. Explain that the word *Gethsemane* means oil press, which is significant because there Jesus was pressed emotionally while anticipating the suffering He would endure.

TRANSITION: *In today's Scripture, by acknowledging His requests before God, Jesus ultimately submits Himself to God's will.*

READ: Encourage the group to close their eyes and picture the setting as you read aloud **Luke 22:41-46**.

IDENTIFY: Lead the group to locate specific characteristics of Jesus' prayer practices in the passage. Use information from the PSG (pp. 84–85) to explain the physical characteristics, such as Jesus withdrawing and kneeling.

EXPLAIN: Direct attention to the cup that contains the challenging life situations the group identified at the beginning of the session. Emphasize Jesus' reference to "this cup" in verse 42. Explain that in the Old Testament, the "cup of wrath" is a common metaphor. (See Jer. 25:15.) Say: *While Jesus made the desire of His heart known to God, His primary concern on earth was to do God's will. Prayer does not make our will known to God. He knows before we even ask. Prayer often makes God's will known to us.*

HIGHLIGHT: Point to **Pack Item 4** (*Poster: Jesus' Trials*), displayed in the room. Note that Jesus was aware of what suffering lay ahead for Him, but He chose obedience to God's will.

CONNECT: Lead the group in reading or praying the Model Prayer as recorded in Matthew 6:9-13. Direct attention to "Your will be done" in verse 10. Ask: ***How does Jesus' prayer in the garden reflect how Jesus taught others to pray in Matthew 6:9-13?*** (PSG, p. 85)

HIGHLIGHT: Distribute copies of **Pack Item 8** (*Handout: Memory Verses Bookmark*). As a group, read aloud verse 42. Encourage the group to memorize the verse this week.

DISCUSS: ***How did Jesus' daily prayer practice prepare Him to pray at this moment? How does a person's past practices impact present disciplines?*** (PSG, p. 86)

READ: Invite a volunteer to read aloud Luke 22:47-50 as the group listens for Judas's action and the response of the disciples.

IDENTIFY: Direct the group to scan the comments on verses 47-48 in the PSG (p. 87), looking for background information about Judas. Point out the irony of Judas, the money handler, betraying Jesus for money, and the kiss being an enemy's gesture of betrayal. Discuss: ***How did Jesus demonstrate confidence in the Father while facing His betrayer?***

ANALYZE: Place the group into teams. Direct each team to review verses 49-50, paying particular attention to the disciples' response. Guide each team to agree on a three-word-or-less descriptor that characterizes the disciples' response. Point them to the PSG (p. 87) for assistance if needed. Invite representatives to share results of their discussion.

DISCUSS: What do the contrasting reactions of Jesus and His disciples reveal about their trust in God at that moment? How does a person's reaction in a challenging time reveal the object of their trust? (PSG, p. 88)

TRANSITION: *The disciples were on alert, ready to guard and defend Jesus. Jesus had a different reaction.*

READ: Direct the group to read silently Luke 22:51-53, looking for Jesus' response to the violence. Say: *Jesus did not want His disciples to defend Him with physical force. More importantly, He did not want to hinder what must take place.*

EXPLAIN: Use information in the PSG (p. 88) to explain that Jesus' healing of the man's ear was a sign of care and forgiveness to those who have come to take Him prisoner. Invite a volunteer to read aloud Romans 5:10. Note that Paul explained Jesus' actions in terms of taking action

to reconcile us to God even when we were enemies of God.

DISCUSS: How did the healing of the servant's ear demonstrate Jesus' willingness to follow the Father's plan? (PSG, p. 88)

IDENTIFY: Lead the group to identify the ways Jesus responded to His capturers, including His comment about "your hour" in verse 53. Suggest they refer to the information on page 89 of the PSG. Discuss: ***How does submitting to God's will, even in the face of rejection, provide confidence and comfort?*** (PSG, p. 89)

TRANSITION: *Darkness will have its brief hour, but the light of the resurrection will shine for all of eternity.*

SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE

REVIEW: Call attention to the summary statement under the title for this session (PSG, p. 82): *Jesus willingly submitted to the Father's redemptive plan.* Lead the group to identify how the three summary statements under Apply the Text (PSG, p. 90) relate to the summary statement for the session.

RESPOND: Prior to the group time, select one or more of the question sets under Apply the Text. Lead the group to respond to the selected questions. You may choose to lead them to respond silently, suggesting they revisit this section later in the day or week.

PRAY: Conclude the group time with prayer, thanking God for Jesus' willingness to submit to His redemptive plan. Pray that Jesus' example will encourage the group to be willing to trust God's plan during life's challenging times.

OPTIONS

Use these options to supplement and enhance the group plans on the previous pages.

MUSIC

Lead the group to sing or listen to “Have Faith in God,” by B. B. McKinney. As they sing or listen, suggest they reflect on times they trusted God when they felt alone and/or faced challenges. Invite volunteers to share which verse of the song speaks most to them and why.

TESTIMONY

Pre-enlist a volunteer to share about an experience in which he or she trusted God during a challenging time or when you trusted God during a challenge. Focus on recognizing the situation as part of God’s plan.

MINI-LECTURE

Focus on verse 43, where an angel appeared to Jesus. Prepare a brief summary of the angelic manifestation referenced in the PSG (pp. 85–86), which took place during Jesus’ ministry. Use a concordance or Bible dictionary for additional information. Present your findings to the group, and invite volunteers to name other occasions of angelic visits in the Bible.

WORD STUDY

Collect Bible concordances or study Bibles with a concordance.

Form teams (two people can be a team). Provide each team with a concordance or study Bible, or suggest references they can access on their electronic devices. Refer to the Bible Skill (PSG, p. 89), directing the teams to locate passages that refer to powers of darkness. Invite teams to share their findings, including Colossians 1:13.

Discuss: ***What are the limits of Satan’s dark rule?*** (PSG, p. 89) ***How does this knowledge encourage you when facing difficult or dark circumstances?***

COMPARISON

Review the comments about verses 51-53 (PSG, pp. 88–89). Lead the group to discuss: ***Suppose this situation were to take place in today’s world. What might happen? How might it be communicated?*** Direct the group to compare those findings with Luke’s report in verses 49-53. Compare Jesus’ response to violence with the world’s response to violence today.

MONOLOGUE

Pre-enlist a volunteer to develop a monologue from the perspective of one of the disciples who fell asleep while Jesus was praying. Include how Jesus awakened the disciples, the appearance of the mob, and Jesus’ response. Invite the person to present the monologue prior to concluding the session.

PRAYER

Discuss the example Jesus gave us in regularly going to His Father in prayer. Reuse the cup from the introductory remarks to the session, except this time have everyone write prayer requests on small slips of paper. They can choose whether to include their own names. Then pass the cup around, encouraging each person to take one of the prayer requests. Direct them to continue praying for the requests they drew from the cup throughout the week.