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### *Devotion for April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022*

*"And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And He said to His disciples, 'Sit here while I pray.' And He took with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. And He said to them, 'My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch.' And going a little farther, He fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. And He said, 'Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Remove this cup from Me. Yet not what I will, but what You will.' And He came and found them sleeping, and He said to Peter, 'Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' And again He went away and prayed, saying the same words. And again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer Him. And He came a third time and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough; the hour has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.'"*

*- Mark 14:32-41*

**In this account from Mark, we read that Jesus took time to prepare Himself for the suffering He knew He was going to endure.** He took His disciples with Him to a private place on the same evening they celebrated the Passover and Jesus instituted Holy Communion. The place was the Garden of Gethsemane.

Jesus took His disciples, minus Judas, who had already left to betray Him. When He went farther into the garden to pray He took the disciples He was very close to on a personal level; Simon, James, and John. Jesus took them with Him for the comfort of having those close to Him present as He was praying. Jesus was already feeling the weight of the suffering He knew He was going to endure. He knew the trial of His life here on earth was upon Him. There was a secondary reason He took the three disciples and that was so that they could watch and see how He prayed to His Father in heaven. It was a teaching time for them.

We can learn from Jesus' prayer to His Father in heaven. Jesus began His prayer by greeting His Father and acknowledging who He was and is. In my words like this: 'Father, You are the one who is almighty.' Then Jesus gave His request. His request was that if there was another way other than His suffering

and death, then please Father, remove this from Me. Jesus also made sure that His disciples heard and that you and I know that He was willing to do His Father's will regardless of the consequences.

We can see that Jesus prayed the same prayer three times. So, was He showing us that we should pray the same prayer over and over again? Now, I have been struggled lately with the idea that we should pray the same prayer over and over again. You see, Jesus prayed the same prayer three times, but He was teaching His disciples and they kept falling asleep, so He repeated it.

Many times in the New Testament we are told to pray continually. I reviewed many of these type passages and they don't recommend praying the same prayer over and over, however, they also don't say not to.

It looks something like this to me:

If I am praying for guidance, wisdom, understanding, forgiveness, strengthening of faith or the spread of the Gospel across the world, the same prayer makes sense, because we are making the same prayer for a different situation. If I am having trouble coming up with the words for my prayer or I am praying with others, then a prepared prayer would be useful.

Maybe my struggle comes from this thought. How many prayers of the same prayer are required before God will answer? At what point am I doubting whether God will answer? Let me share this from Jesus as recorded in

Matthew 6:5-8:

*"And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not pray like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him." ([Matthew 6:5-8](#))*

Just after saying this, Jesus gave us the Lord's Prayer.

I think there is an unending list of items we can privately pray for. We can pray continuously without saying the same prayer over and over. Jesus prayed three times in Gethsemane not because three of the same prayer were required to get His Father's attention or were needed for Him to hear. He knew that His Father would hear and answer His first prayer, the other two were for His disciples. Jesus also said this to His disciples and to you and me:

*"Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He will give it to you." ([John 16:23b](#))*

We can be certain that our Father in heaven will answer our prayers. His Father answered Jesus when Judas showed up with the soldiers to arrest Him. It was the Father's will that He should follow the path before Him.

*In Christ,  
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