

# GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



## GIG185 – Christ Was Not a Victim

Hello, and welcome once again to the podcast. I hope these podcasts are being a blessing to you, and ministering into your life those things which will help you and enable you as you are pressing in to grow in God. Today, I want to talk about the fact that Christ was not a victim. We know that He suffered many things, but it is important to realize that He did not go through any of His life as a victim. Instead, it was a choice, by His will, to live the life that God had chosen for Him. Now, this is important, in my thinking, because I think we live in a generation where people almost exalt the concept of being a victim. We look for victimhood all over, all around us, and we get behind this idea of people being a victim; and of course, that just feeds more of the victim mentality in people, and I believe it is something that is negative in this aspect of our society.

I believe that we need to find a way to rise up, to really get a hold of what our destiny is, our purpose in life is, our purpose for being here on this earth. Certainly, if we are Christian believers, we need to lay hold of the will of God for our lives, and have an understanding of it; and then, no matter how difficult it becomes, we move through those difficulties by faith. So, I want to launch into this today, and hopefully really deliver us from any ways in which we are kind of wallowing in victimhood, or getting stuck with a victim mentality that I think is counterproductive to our faith and to our growth in God.

There were a few things that Christ experienced when He went to the garden of Gethsemane. First of all, He really went through a process of confirming what He was about to experience on the cross. He confirmed that what He was about to go through was actually the will of God for Him. Secondly, in that time of Gethsemane, He chose to give Himself, and committed Himself to endure the cross, through His own will. He laid His life down; no one took His life from Him, including the Father. The Father did not take His life; Christ willingly committed Himself to the events that transpired. This is all important for us to recognize. Now, one thing that we see about Christ before this experience of Gethsemane is that He had a clarity about His destiny in God – even before going to the garden of Gethsemane. And I think that this is important for us to realize.

I want to read out of Matthew the sixteenth chapter, verses 21-25.

From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You." But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's." Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."

So it is clear that Christ knew and taught His disciples what His destiny was regarding the sufferings, regarding the cross, and the events that were to transpire.

I want to read again out of Matthew the twentieth chapter, verses 17-19.

As Jesus was about to go up to Jerusalem, He took the twelve disciples aside by themselves, and on the way He said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, and will hand Him over to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him, and on the third day He will be raised up."

Now, these are an important few verses. One reason, and the main purpose for this podcast teaching, is to recognize that Christ, before Gethsemane, before going to Jerusalem for these events to take place and transpire, knew what was to happen. He had an understanding of who He was in God, what His destiny was, and the events that surrounded the fulfillment of that destiny. Once again, I think as believers, this is important to us, especially if we believe that we are living in the end times. Many people today are looking for events in their lives to go a certain way. I know that many, many people of the faith are believing for a rapture to come. But part of their concept of that rapture is that they do not go through any suffering, that they do not go through persecution; that they have a simple life of walking by faith, and then, before anything terrible happens, they are raptured out. And I just want to say, number one, I personally do not believe that there will be a rapture of the Church as is taught by the Church in today's doctrine. But also, the teaching of the rapture does not preclude the reality of potential persecution and events that could transpire for you as a believer prior to the event of a rapture. So there needs to be a great deal of carefulness, because I think part of the issue here is, are you caught unaware? and are you not prepared for what you may face and what you may go through?

We see that Christ was prepared way beforehand by the Father. And I believe this should be part of our prayer as believers, to reach in to the Father, to wait upon the Lord, to ask the Holy Spirit to teach us and to bring revelation to us about the events and the destiny that are included in our lives and our walk before the Lord. Because we may find ourselves, as Christ did, having to suffer things – as John the Baptist did, as the prophets did before them. There was a great deal of suffering that transpired, there was persecution, there was pain, that was part of their destiny in God, and part of their relationship with the Father in order to fulfill His will in their lives.

This is not necessarily a main point of this teaching, but I want us to really consider the fact that as we go along in these days – especially if we believe these are end days, as the Scripture speaks about – that we are careful not to just assume that our lives will not face some of these types of events. We should believe that the Father can show us and teach us and prepare us through understanding what His will is in our lives. That should be a point for us. Let's pray, let's believe that there be an understanding on each of our parts; because each of us has a different destiny in God, and we need to understand what the will of God is for us in our destiny – just as the destiny that Christ faced was different than the destiny that John the Baptist faced; it was different than the destiny that the disciples would face. God has a plan for us, and He has a purpose for each of us; and in our lives, it is important that we have an understanding of what we will walk through as His believers and as those who are serving Him. So, I just want to encourage us, in our prayer, in our waiting on the Lord, to reach in for an understanding in God.

We see that Christ had this prior to the garden of Gethsemane. Prior to many events transpiring in His life and teaching, He knew that there would be suffering. He understood that He would be mocked and scourged and crucified. He understood that He would be condemned. He understood that He would be persecuted, and that many of these things would happen. He would be, as it says, rejected by this

generation that He was walking in. So, we too should have that understanding, that much may transpire in our lives, just as Christ had that understanding.

So, as He went to Jerusalem, He was teaching the disciples what He would suffer and what He would go through. And that was, hopefully, preparation for them. But we know as the story goes along that they really did not get it. They really did not have an understanding, and it really was a stumbling for them in what He went through. So we want to go on, then, and look at this idea of Christ in the garden of Gethsemane, and see what really transpired for Him through this process.

In Matthew 26, verses 36-39, it reads,

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to His disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed. Then He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me." And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will."

Here we have the first event that is really of importance to us in this teaching about Christ's experience in the garden of Gethsemane. We have already made very clear that Christ, before coming to the garden of Gethsemane, had an understanding about many of the details of what He was going to go through in His life and in the process of the cross. But as He comes into Gethsemane, He is deeply grieved over these things; and He is seeking to confirm with the Father that He is in fact to suffer these persecutions and this condemnation, and the death on the cross. Again, in verse 39, it says, "He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.'" There is nothing wrong with this prayer; and there is nothing wrong with this prayer in our lives, and in your life. You may understand, the Lord may show you things that you are going to go through; it does not mean that it is not proper, or that it is unbelief, to pray and say, "Father, if it is possible," because we know that for the Father, all things are possible. So look at how Christ is checking in again with the Father. He knows that there is nothing impossible to God; so, God can make this cup pass from Him. He can maybe work this out another way. Who knows? Nothing is impossible to God. So He comes to the Father and He says, "Listen, if it is possible, if there is another way, then I am asking You to remove this cup from Me, that I not have to go through what I have understood You telling Me I am about to suffer. Let this, if possible, pass from Me."

Now, I do not necessarily think that Christ was just trying to get out of something. I think He recognized that what was about to happen was so horrific that He really wanted the confirmation that His suffering was absolutely the will of God, His crucifixion was absolutely the will of the Father. It was not anybody else's will. He wasn't just facing the consequences of preaching to humans that were not believing in Him; He wasn't just facing the wrath of the Romans; He wasn't just facing the wrath of the High Priest. He was wanting to know that this was the will of God, and only the will of God – everybody else who was about to be involved in this were secondary players that were being used and positioned in fulfilling His destiny; but His destiny was the will of God. It was the will of His Father for Him. And so, to me, this cry, knowing that the Father could do anything, knowing that the Father could make this cup pass from Him, Christ was making sure that this cross experience was absolutely and only the will of the Father – not the will of anybody else, including Himself. It was God's will for His life that He go through these things. So that is, to me, a very huge part of the cross. It is a reason for the garden of Gethsemane

experience. He was making absolutely sure, before He faced these things, that all of these things were the mind of God and the absolute will of God for Him.

We go on then with the story, and we will look for another major point that was so essential for Christ in preparing for the cross. Verses 43-46,

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, saying the same thing once more [three times He confirmed with the Father that this was His will]. Then He came to the 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. Get up, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!"

I want to go to Luke the twenty-second chapter, because I want to just read the story again out of another Gospel, so that we be sure we are really covering all of the aspects of it. In verses 39-42, He begins,

And He came out and proceeded as was His custom to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him. When He arrived at the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and began to pray, saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."

Here we have, put together in one verse, the fact that He was seeking the Father's absolute will; and at the same time, following that knowledge, he was committing Himself to do that will. So He wanted to be assured absolutely that what He would experience was the will of the Father; and when He was assured of that, then He committed Himself to do the will of the Father.

Verse 43, "Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him." After He goes through this, there is a strengthening that comes to Him, a strengthening, knowing He is going through the will of God, and also knowing that His will is set. And so, His will and His heart are strengthened to be able to withstand what He was facing.

Verses 44-46,

And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground. When He rose from prayer, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping from sorrow, and said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not enter into temptation."

He realizes what the disciples are going to face. They should be doing the same as Christ was doing – they should be contending that what they are about to face is absolutely the will of the Father for themselves, and they should be committing themselves in their will to go through this experience. He warns them, "You should be praying these same prayers, lest you enter into temptation." And we know that they did. And we know that they failed in that temptation, and that they all withdrew from Him, and they all ran from the events; and Peter lied about what was going on. So, they were not prepared, because they were not serving in the same way that Christ was – finding out what the will of the Father was for their lives, and praying that their wills be committed to go through what they must go through. "Get up and pray that you may not enter into temptation." This, to me, it is a prayer for us. This is a verse for us. We see how the disciples went through this. We see what Christ was doing – He was absolutely confirming the will of the Father in His life, and He was committing His will to walk

through that. Nobody took His life from Him, even the Father; He gave His life through His will set to do the will of God. The disciples, however, did not do that. And we see that it is a problem for them later.

Verse 47 says, "While He was still speaking, behold, a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was preceding them; and he approached Jesus to kiss Him." So the events began to unfold, but Christ was prepared. The disciples, however, were not. And I think it is interesting that, beforehand, when Christ was telling the disciples about what He would face and the sufferings that He would go through, included in that teaching was the warning to them. I want to go back to Luke the ninth chapter and read from verses 20-24. It says,

And He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered and said, "The Christ of God." But He warned them and instructed them not to tell this to anyone, saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised up on the third day." And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it."

So we see, right in the time of Christ teaching the disciples about what He was going through, that He warned them that they were going to have to take up their own cross and follow Him. So, how do you go to the cross? You must first go through this Gethsemane experience. And I believe it is time for us all, as believers, to go through this experience of getting before the Father and knowing what His will is for us; understanding what it is that we may go through, what we may suffer, and what we may face as we walk in the will of God for our lives. Once we recognize those things and we know that they are absolutely the will of the Father, as Christ proved out for Himself in the garden, then we must commit our own will, so that what we go through, we go through by our own choice.

We are not to be victims in this age. We are not to be victims of the end time. We are to walk through the end time by faith. We are to walk with boldness and with a knowledge that what we are experiencing is the will of God for us, and we are not victims of those who persecute us, of those who come against us, of events that unfold because of the times of the end. We are to stand. Having done all to stand, what do we do? we stand. We are to stand, knowing that it is our choice to walk in the will of God for our lives. Whatever is happening around us is not happening to us so that we have a victim mentality. We have first gone through what Christ did as an example for us, that we know the will of the Father in our lives, and we have chosen to walk in His will for our lives. Therefore, we stand as He did. No matter what He faced, and no matter how painful and horrific it was, He went through it knowing that it was His commitment to the Father to do His perfect will; and we must walk in these days the same way. We cannot be like the disciples, who passively fall asleep in the garden. We must be checking the will of God for our lives, we must be committing ourselves to the will of God in our lives, so that we might walk by faith in the perfect will of God for ourselves.

So, just to review these key points:

Christ had a knowledge and understanding about His destiny. And I believe we should also.

When Christ entered Gethsemane, He was confirming with the Father the destiny in His life of the cross and the sufferings, so that He knew absolutely what the will of God for His life was.

Lastly, Yeshua committed Himself, by the choice of His will, to walk in those things. He was not a victim.

We need to go through this same process, because as we walk in these last days, we cannot have a victim mentality. If we do, it will drain our faith away, and we will not be a witness to the world that we need to be of what it is to walk with the Father and do His will in our generation.

I bless this word to our hearts. I believe for it to strengthen you in your destiny and in your walk with the Father and the Son and the Spirit. Amen.