

## Podcast Episode 1: Gethsemane

**QUESTION: What is the significance of what Christ went through in the Garden of Gethsemane?** What follows is Denver's eyewitness description, not only of what happened in the Garden of Gethsemane, but also what those events mean to you and me.

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DENVER: We know from Isaiah that by His stripes we are healed. God laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He bore our griefs, carried our sorrows, and the chastisement we earned was put upon Him.

Traditionally, Christians have understood that to have been accomplished in the Roman beating, scourging, and crucifixion of Christ. However, many men suffered similarly at the hands of Rome. Christ suffered to remove our sins and repair the fall of mankind. Isaiah's description suggests that this was cosmic and that Christ took the entire burden of mankind's sins upon Himself. Only Luke gives a glimpse into Christ's suffering in Gethsemane. Luke describes it in these words:

*"And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." (Luke 22:44).*

In an 1829 revelation, Christ explained the price He paid for our salvation. His reflection on that suffering mentions only what happened to Him in Gethsemane, the place where Luke recorded He sweat great drops of blood. Let me read you what Jesus Christ explained of that event in 1829.

*"Therefore I command you to repent—repent, lest I smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your sufferings be sore—how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not. For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent; But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I; Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink— Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men. Wherefore, I command you again to repent, lest I humble you with my almighty power; and that you confess your sins, lest you suffer these punishments of which I have spoken." (Doctrine and Covenants 19:15-20)*

Christ pleads with us in this revelation to repent of our sins so we do not experience anything like the dreadful price He paid for us. We should let that message penetrate our hearts: God does not want us punished. God wants to relieve us from the bitterness of our sins.

In His kindness and mercy, Christ revealed yet more of His suffering in His atoning sacrifice in February of 2005 and December of 2007. Again, He provided us with a description of what happened in Gethsemane.

This is the account:

“I knew a man in Christ about four years ago who, being overshadowed by the Spirit on the 26th of February, 2005, had the Lord appear to him again. And the Lord spoke to him face to face in plain humility, as one man speaks to another, calling him by name. As they spoke the Lord put forth His hand and touched the eyes of the man and said, Look! The man had opened before him view of the Lord kneeling in prayer. It was in a dark place. The air was heavy and overcast with sorrow. The man beheld the Lord praying in Gethsemane on the night of His betrayal and before His crucifixion.

All the Lord had previously done in His mortal ministry by healing the sick, raising the dead, giving sight to the blind, restoring hearing to the deaf, curing the leper and ministering relief to others as He taught was but a prelude to what the Lord was now to do on this dark, oppressive night.

As the Lord knelt in prayer, His vicarious suffering began. He was overcome by pain and anguish. He felt within Him, not just the pains of sin, but also the illnesses men suffer as a result of the Fall and their foolish and evil choices. The suffering was long and the challenge difficult. The Lord suffered the afflictions. He was healed from the sickness. He overcame the pains, and patiently bore the infirmities until, finally, He returned to peace of mind and strength of body. It took an act of will and hope for Him to overcome the affliction which had been poured upon Him. He overcame the separation caused by these afflictions and reconciled with His Father. He was at peace with all mankind.

He thought His sufferings were over, but to His astonishment another wave overcame Him. This one was much greater than the first. The Lord, who had been kneeling, fell forward onto His hands at the impact of the pain that was part of a greater, second wave.

This second wave was so much greater than the first that it seemed to entirely overcome the Lord. The Lord was now stricken with physical injuries as well as spiritual affliction. As He suffered anew, His flesh was torn which He healed using the power of the charity within Him. The Lord had such life within Him, such power and virtue within Him, that although He suffered in His flesh, these injuries healed and His flesh restored. His suffering was both body and spirit, and there was anguish of thought, feeling and soul.

The Lord overcame this second wave of suffering, and again found peace of mind and strength of body; and His heart filled with love despite what He had suffered. Indeed, it was charity or love that allowed Him to overcome. He was at peace with His Father, and with all mankind, but it required another, still greater act of will and charity than the first for Him to do so.

Again, the Lord thought His suffering was over. He stayed on His hands and knees for a moment to collect Himself when another wave of torment burst upon Him. This wave struck Him with such force He fell forward upon His face. He was afflicted by this greater wave. He was then healed only to then be afflicted again as the waves of torment overflowed. Wave after wave poured out upon Him, with only moments between them. The Lord's suffering

progressed from a lesser to a greater portion of affliction; for as one would be overcome by Him, the next, greater affliction would then be poured out. Each wave of suffering was only preparation for the next, greater wave. The pains of mortality, disease, injury and infirmity, together with the sufferings of sin, transgressions, guilt of mind, and unease of soul, the horrors of recognition of the evils men had inflicted upon others, were all poured out upon Him, with confusion and perplexity multiplied upon Him.

He longed for it to be over, and thought it would end long before it finally ended. With each wave He thought it would be the last but then another came upon Him, and then yet another.

The one beholding this scene was pained by what he saw, and begged for the vision of the Lord's suffering to end. He could not bear to see his Lord suffering in this manner. The petition was denied and the vision did not end, for the Lord required him to witness it.

The man saw that the Lord pleaded again with the Father that "this cup may pass" from Him. But the Lord was determined to suffer the Father's will and not His own. Therefore, a final wave came upon Him with such violence as to cut Him at every pore. It seemed for a moment that He was torn apart, and that blood came out of every pore. The Lord writhed in pain upon the ground as this great final torment was poured upon Him.

All virtue was taken from Him. All the great life force in Him was stricken and afflicted. All the light turned to darkness. He was humbled, drained and left with nothing. It is not possible for a man to bear such pains and live, but with nothing more than will, hope in His Father, and charity towards all men, He emerged from the final wave of torment, knowing He had suffered all this for His Father and His brethren. By His hope and great charity, trusting in the Father, the Lord returned from this dark abyss and found grace again, His heart being filled with love toward the Father and all men.

These great burdens were born by the Lord not only on behalf of mankind, but also as a necessary prelude to His death upon a Roman cross. Had He not been so physically weakened by these sufferings and drained of power from within, the scourging and crucifixion He suffered at the hands of men could not have taken His life.

It was many hours after this vision closed before the one who witnessed this suffering could compose himself again. He wept because of the vision shown him, and he wondered at the Lord's great suffering for mankind.

The witness reflected for many days upon this scene of the Lord's great suffering. He read many times the account of the Lord's agony given to Joseph Smith, which reads, *"Therefore I command you to repent - repent, lest I smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your sufferings be sore - how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not. For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent; But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I; Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit - and would*

*that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink - Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men."* [D&C 9].

He pondered and asked: Why were there waves of torment? Why did they increase in difficulty? How were they organized as they seemed to fit a pattern?

After long inquiring into these things which he had seen, the Lord, who is patient and merciful and willing to instruct those who call on Him, again appeared to the man on the 20th of December, 2007. He made known unto him that the waves of torment suffered by the Lord came in pairs which mirrored each other. The first of each wave poured upon the Lord those feelings, regrets, recriminations and pains felt by those who injured their fellow man. Then followed a second wave, which mirrored the first, but imposed the pains suffered by the victims of the acts committed by those in the first wave. Instead of the pains of those who inflict hurt or harm, it was now the anger, bitterness and resentments felt by those who suffered these wrongs.

From each wave of suffering, whether as the one afflicting or as the victim of those wrongs, the Lord would overcome the evil feelings associated with these wrongs, and find His heart again filled with peace. This was why, in the vision of the suffering of the Lord, it was in the second waves that there appeared oftentimes to be injuries to His body.

The greater difficulty in these paired waves of torment was always overcoming the suffering of the victim. With these waves the Lord learned to overcome the victims' resentments, to forgive, and to heal both body and spirit. This was more difficult than overcoming the struggles arising from the one who committed the evil. This is because the one doing evil knows he has done wrong and feels a natural regret when he sees himself aright. The victim, however, always feels it is their right to hold resentment, to judge their persecutor, and to withhold peace and love from their fellow man. The Lord was required to overcome both so that He could succor both.

In the pairing of the waves, the first torment was of the mind and spirit, and the second was torment of mind, spirit and body.

The Lord experienced all the horror and regret wicked men feel for their crimes when they finally see the truth. He experienced the suffering of their victims whose righteous anger and natural resentment and disappointment must also be shed, and forgiveness given, in order for them to find peace. He overcame them all. He descended below them all. He comprehends it all. And He knows how to bring peace to them all. He knows how to love others whether they are the one who has given offense or the one who is a victim of the offense.

In the final wave, the most brutal, most evil, most heinous sins men inflict upon one another were felt by Him as a victim of the worst men can do. He knew how it felt to wrongly suffer death. He knew what it was like to be a mother holding a child in her arms as they are both killed by those who delighted in their suffering. He knew how it was for ambitious men to rid themselves of a rival by conspiracy and murder. He knew what it was to have virtue robbed from the innocent. He knew betrayal, treachery, and abuse in all its worst degrading horror.

There was no cruelty, no offense, no evil that mankind has suffered or will suffer that was not put upon Him.

He knew what it is like for men to satisfy their ambition by clothing their hypocrisy in religious garb. He also felt what it was like to be the victim of religious oppression by those who pretend to practice virtue while oppressing others.

He knew the hearts of those who would kill Him. Before confronting their condemnation of Him in the flesh, He suffered their torment of mind when they recognized He was the Lord, and then found peace for what they would do by rejecting Him. In this extremity there was madness itself as He mirrored the evil which would destroy Him, and learned how to come to peace with the Father after killing the Son of God, and to love all those involved without restraint and without pretense even before they did these terrible deeds. His suffering, therefore, encompassed all that has happened, all that did happen, and all that would happen in the future.

As a result of what the Lord suffered, there is no condition physical, spiritual or mental that He does not fully understand. He knows how to teach, comfort, succor and direct any who will come to Him seeking forgiveness and peace. This is why the prophet wrote, *"by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities."* [Isa 53] And again, *"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."* [Isa 53]

He obtained this knowledge by the things he suffered. He suffered that we might avoid sin by being obedient to His commandments. None of us need harm another, if we will follow Him. He knows fully the consequences of sin. He teaches His followers to avoid sin. The prophet Alma taught and understood our Lord's suffering as he wrote, *"And he shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people. And he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities."* [Alma 4].

He can bring peace to any soul. He can help those who will come to Him love their fellow man. He alone is the Perfect Teacher because He alone has the knowledge each of us lack to return to being whole and at peace with God the Father of us all after our transgression of His will. Christ is wise to what is required for each man's salvation.

As the Lord made these terrible things known to the man he cried out, Hosanna to the Lamb of God! He has trodden the winepress alone! Glory, honor and mercy be upon the Chosen One forever and ever! I will submit unto anything you see fit to require of me! I will bend my knee in obedience to you! Let thy will, not mine be done! For worthy is the Lamb!" Then, thinking

upon how trifling his difficulties and disappointments had been in comparison with the suffering he saw imposed upon his Lord, the man added, Surely goodness and mercy have been mine all the days of my life!

And the Lord responded, And you shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Then the man wept.” (Snuffer, Denver C. (2009). *Come Let Us Adore Him.*)

From the foregoing accounts, Christ has finally made it clear to us that His death on the cross was not where He paid the price for our sins. Many have died in that same way and suffered that same dreadful agony. But Christ alone paid for mankind’s sins because He alone was able to take on the terrible burden of our terrible failures. He conquered sin.

This is the one about whom the scriptures are speaking. This is the lord who is asking you to come to Him. He is not aloof, and He is not distant. If He’ll speak to someone in a military barracks, He’ll speak to you--every one of you. And what He has to say to you is far more important than anything I have to say. But I can bear testimony of Him. And I can assure you that He will not leave your petitions unanswered. And I can also assure you that today is once again a day of salvation and He has set His hand again. No matter how unlikely it may appear, no matter how much reason there is to be skeptical, no matter how many more signs you think may need to be fulfilled, I am telling you He has set His hand again. The heavens are open for business, and the question is whether you’re interested in becoming a customer or not.

Christ suffered for our sins in Gethsemane. Christ died on the cross while testifying He was the promised Messiah. Christ rose from the dead to break the bonds of death. Since He was entitled to live forever, His death was an infinite price to pay. Therefore the demands of justice have all been met--and that infinitely. We can benefit from that by accepting the ransom He has paid, repenting, and being baptized.

If you’ve not been baptized, or if you would like to be re-baptized there are people who have authority to do so, who will do so without charge, without requesting or expecting a donation. Indeed they’d refuse it if you offered it.

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