

REFLECTIONS

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"Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

Mark 14:36

Approaching Gethsemane

There are times in my life when I haven't slept well. Sometimes there seems to be no explanation at all, a few times the cause is excitement about a coming event, but usually my insomnia is caused by anticipation of something I do not want. So I can imagine the agony Abraham endured the night before he was to go sacrifice his son.

You will remember that Abraham took his long awaited son, Isaac, up to Mount Moriah to offer him as a sacrifice to God. God had promised Abraham a son. God promised to make Abraham a great nation with heirs as many as the stars. Yet, God had also asked him to take his only legitimate son and to sacrifice him as he would a lamb. Abraham was called to do something he did not want to do, and surely the anticipation must have produced a sleepless night.

Jesus must have felt the same way too as he was approaching Gethsemane. He knew what He was called to do, but that did not mean that He wanted to do it. In fact, Jesus said to his disciples, **"My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow..."**¹ Then with his face to the ground and with blood dripping from his forehead, he prayed for the cup to be taken from him.

And I suspect God had some feelings, too. He must have felt like Abraham as He anticipated the sacrifice of *his* son. Tomorrow Jesus would endure the most humiliating abuse and punishing pain. But *God so loved the world that He gave his one and only son.*² Even God must have approached Gethsemane with a heavy heart.

God spared the life of Abraham's son; and Jesus was resurrected from the dead. God did not spare them the pain, but God opened the doors of life beyond the pain.

From time to time, we are all called to do something that we don't want to do. Whether it is to let go of someone we love or a possession we cherish, or whether it is a commitment to fulfill our life's purpose, at some time in our walk through this life, we find ourselves approaching Gethsemane. And God requires us to endure the pain of it all.

But God is a loving God. He may not prevent the suffering, but He does open the doors of life beyond the pain.

"You are the light of the world,"

Richard +

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¹ Matthew 26:38

² John 3:16

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