



# REFLECTIONS

August 6, 2017

**"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."**

*John 16:33*

## Gethsemane

It's difficult to imagine the Mount of Olives the way it might have looked in Jesus' day. Surely it didn't gain its name from the treeless sea of stony graves covering its western slope as we see it today. But it *is* easy to imagine the scene Jesus saw from its peak. Between the Kidron Valley and the western horizon sits the old city of Jerusalem surrounded by its protective heavy stone wall. Bounded within those walls today, lots of history has been documented. It dates back at least to when Abraham led his son, Isaac, up Mt. Moriah to offer him in sacrifice. Mt. Moriah is also the place the temple once stood, and not very far from the place where Jesus shared his last supper with his disciples.

Images of those stories and many others dance through one's mind from the vantage of the Mount of Olives. The scene brought Jesus to tears. "*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem*" he cried in remembrance of the suffering that happened there, but in grief for the suffering still to come. Jesus himself became the subject of suffering that would happen next. Those thoughts led him to seek a quiet place—a place to be alone with God.

Gethsemane is but a short walk from the top of the Mt. of Olives. The garden there feels like peace undisturbed, a place to talk to God. It was there Jesus prayed the night he was betrayed. It was there he asked his Father to care for his disciples. It was there he prayed for you and me and for the world. And it was there we can imagine his arms resting on a very large flat stone, his eyes looking upward toward his heavenly home, and beads of blood oozing from his forehead when Jesus prayed for himself. "*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)

"*In this world you will have trouble.*" Hardly a day goes by without it. That's why we all need a Gethsemane in our lives—a place with peace undisturbed, a place to talk to God. We all need a place to ask God to remove the troubles in our lives; and a place to petition God for the well-being of others.

But if our troubles are God's will for us to bear, then we need a place to pray for our lives to bring glory to God through whatever our circumstances may be.

*You are the light of the world,*

*Richard +*

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