

**SPEAKER:** Ryan Lingbloom

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## **Sermon Title**

**“Garden to Grave”**

### **Introduction**

This week, we begin our preparation for Easter weekend. This is the most pivotal moment in the faith of a Christian, and it begins on Palm Sunday. During this Holy Week, Jesus continued teaching and leading, preparing His disciples for what was coming, and preparing Himself for what He was about to do for all of us. Our focus for this week’s study is on Jesus the night He was arrested. He spent that time, after the Last Supper, in the **Garden**, preparing for the **Grave**. And how did Jesus spend this time? The same way that we ought to spend a lot more of our time, in prayer. To get started this week, answer this icebreaker question with your group:

- What would you consider the best day of your life, and what would you consider one of your worst days? How did you see God at work during those times?

### **Seek the Word**

Read Mark 14:32-36 aloud, then answer the questions below:

- What does Jesus’ prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane reveal about His relationship with the Father and His understanding of His mission?
- When you pray, do you usually recognize and honor God as Father (Abba) and for His power, or do you usually jump right into what you are wanting from God? How could your relationship with God change if the way you prayed changed?

Read Mark 14:37-42 aloud, then answer the questions below:

- How do the disciples’ actions in the garden reflect our own struggles with spiritual vigilance and prayer?
- Even surrounded by friends and brothers, the apostles struggled with obedience to Jesus in the Garden. Talk with your group about how you can be even more vigilant and supportive in each other’s lives and faith journeys than the disciples were.

Read Luke 11:1 aloud, then answer the questions below:

- Why do you think the disciples specifically asked Jesus to teach them how to pray?
- What does this teaching tell us about the importance of prayer in Jesus’ life?

### **Go Deeper**

Jesus- the perfect Son of God, sinless, without fault, one with the Father and Spirit- prayed. In all seasons, throughout His whole life and ministry, Jesus spent time praying to God. So it is not surprising that in His toughest moment, feeling the pressure and significance of the moment He was in and about to enter, He prayed. Reflect on a time when you felt “crushed” by life’s circumstances. How did you respond, what role did your faith play in that situation, and what did you learn about the significance of prayer either in or after that circumstance?

## Talk About It

- What has been a challenge for you in developing a consistent prayer life? What ways can you develop a more consistent and faithful prayer life, especially in preparation for life's inevitable challenges?
- Jesus fell on his knees and prayed to God that "this cup" would be taken from Him. But He followed that by saying, "Yet not what I will, but what you will". What can you take from this example of submission and trust that Jesus displays and apply it to your own life circumstances?
- There was a very pointed question asked in the sermon this week: "Does your pain lead you closer to God or further away from God?" Share your answers with the group, explain why that is for you, and discuss ways in which you can ensure that your pain and struggles consistently lead you closer to God.

## Wrap Up

*Reminder:* Jesus endured pain and agony for you and for me. He was beaten, abused, mocked, whipped, stabbed, and so much more. He endured things that no human before or since has ever gone through, but He did it for a reason. **Jesus' Pain had a Purpose**, and it was to display God's love, forgiveness, and offer of salvation for all people at all times. It was to pay the price for our sins and to conquer sin and death once and for all. The Cross is a declaration that God sees you, loves you, and wants you. This week we call Holy, the Friday we call Good, and the Sunday we call Easter would not be if Jesus had stayed in the Garden. But Jesus went from **The Garden to the Grave** to fulfill His mission of bringing life to us. Remember that this week in preparation for Easter, and let that truth fuel you in your life as a disciple: praying, worshiping, and sharing your faith with those around you.

*Challenge for the Week:* Each day, pray for somebody specific in your life that they would encounter Jesus this week. Then, go out of your way to trust God with that prayer, and extend a personal invitation to them to join you for the Stations of the Cross and/or an Easter service. Be the hands and feet of Jesus this week, and fill our places of worship with people who need to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ.

*Prayer:* Close your group time by praying together, asking God for the strength to trust Him in difficult times, the wisdom to seek His will above our own, and the courage to embrace the new beginnings He offers through the cross. Pray for each other's specific needs and challenges, lifting them up to God in faith. And pray for the ones who do not know God, that your group could make an impact for the Kingdom by praying, sharing, and inviting.