

**Jesus Suffered Painful Grief, So  
We Could Enjoy Peaceful Sleep  
Saint Mark's, Watertown, WI  
Sermon on Mark 14:32-42  
Pastor Karl Walther  
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As Peter put it, some seven-and-a-half weeks after Christ's passion: *God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.* Let's consider that together this evening.... Amen.

God's Word for our special consideration tonight is the account of Jesus and Peter and the other apostles in the Garden of Gethsemane—Mark chapter fourteen, verses twenty-two through thirty-two. We saw this, and many other things, in the video—and I'll read this section of Scripture throughout the sermon....

**Introduction: Is Your Sleep Peaceful?**

Dear fellow Christians—who trust in Christ and are saved:

How well do you sleep?

Well, I certainly hope you get no good snooze out of this little bit of a sermon—and if you do try to sneak in some sleep, I will raise my voice and throw a hymnal at you, or something!

But I'm talking about your sleep at night.... How well do you sleep?

Maybe the dear Lord is kind to you, as he is to me. As soon as my head hits the pillow, I'm knocked out. And as soon as the alarm clock goes off at five forty-five AM, and often even before, I pop out of bed.

Other people don't sleep so well. It might have to do with pain. It might have to do with age. It might just be the way they're constructed. When they do get a good night's sleep, I know: they value it.

As Christians, we all do have one thing that helps us get some sleep.... Have you ever heard the saying, "A clean conscience makes a soft pillow"? We all sleep better than we otherwise would—knowing we're right in God's sight through faith in Christ Jesus.

**Theme: Jesus Suffered Painful Grief, So We Could Enjoy Peaceful Sleep**

Tonight's Word from God to us has Jesus suffering and the disciples sleeping. This section of Scripture is going to remind us: JESUS SUFFERED PAINFUL GRIEF, SO WE COULD ENJOY PEACEFUL SLEEP. And that will help all of us rest better at the end of this evening.

**Exposition: Jesus, Peter & Other Apostles in the Garden of Gethsemane**

Allow me to read God's Word to us tonight—and to comment, as we go along. It was the very first Maundy Thursday evening—nearly two thousand years ago. Jesus and his apostles had celebrated the final real Passover and the very first Lord's Supper. After that they made their way out of the Upper Room, outside the walls of Jerusalem—probably only about a mile's walk altogether.

That's where our sermon text picks up and says: *They went to a place called Gethsemane.* *Gethsemane* was a very little ways east of Jerusalem, along the road that led down toward Jericho, just across the Kidron Valley from the temple courts. *Gethsemane* means "oil press", and there on the slopes of the Mount of Olives, people

probably pressed olives into oil for cooking and lighting. *Gethsemane* was, of course, a “garden”—something of a self-contained area, probably best: basically a wayside park.

At *Gethsemane*, we read: **Jesus said to his disciples**, probably predominantly the eleven apostles who were left, **"Sit here while I pray."** Meantime: **He took Peter, James and John along with him.** These were the three who had witnessed the raising of Jairus' daughter. These were the three that witnessed the Transfiguration. *Peter* was something of the leader among the apostles. *James* would be the first of the martyrs among them. And *John* would last the longest of all.

And we read: **Jesus began to be deeply distressed and troubled**—“overwhelmed with distress.” It must have felt kind of like when the stomach flu is coming on, but Jesus' suffering had an entirely different cause. **"My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them.** “My very soul is full to death from grief,” we might say. **"Stay here and keep watch."** “Stay here, and stay alert!” And Jesus meant these words especially for Peter, who (he had just warned) was going to deny Jesus repeatedly.

Jesus went: **a little farther.** Other accounts say *a stone's throw*—who knows? maybe another twenty yards among the trees. *He fell to the ground*, under the weight of his impending suffering for sins. **He fell to the ground**, throwing himself on the mercy of his Father, **and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him.**

And what holy words did he employ? **"Abba** – “Dad!!!” – **Father," he said, "everything is possible for you.** You are, after all, omnipotent! **Take this cup from me.** *This cup* of your anger over sin, *this cup* of suffering (for me), *this cup* like the one I gave the apostles – with bitter pain for me, but sweet forgiveness for them – *take this cup from me!* **Yet not what I will, but what you will.** And that, my friends, is one-hundred-percent-perfect obedience, under the most trying of circumstances.

**Then he returned to his disciples and found them ... sleeping** (!) He had been suffering! They had been snoozing!! **"Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep?** And even afterwards, these words were vivid for Peter—because, you see, this Gospel of Mark, we can confidently say, is Peter's Gospel: Mark's compilation of Peter's recollections, inspired in an inerrant way by God the Holy Spirit.

Jesus goes on: **Could you not keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation**—the temptation to deny me, that temptation against which I so earnestly entreated you, Peter, less than hours ago. **The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.** *The spirit is willing*; the new nature God the Holy Spirit placed inside of you when you came to faith in me—*that spirit is willing.* *But* (literally: the flesh) *the flesh is weak*; the old sinful nature, with which you were born, which you inherited from your parents—*that flesh is feeble.*

Well: **Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy.** *Their eyes were heavy* with sleep; it probably wasn't so far from bed time. And *their hearts were heavy*, too, because Jesus had laid on them the heavy news of his suffering and death. And of course: **They did not know what to say to him**—because there's still no excuse for sin.

Well, finally: **Returning the third time, he said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"**

## Appropriation One: We Sleep Spiritually—As Did Peter

And that's it. That's the account for us tonight. So, what does it mean for our day-to-day lives? Well, let's look at it through Peter's eyes—Peter's closed eyes....

We are so much like Peter! Last week we heard Peter say: *Even if all fall away, I will not. ...Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.* And our proud old sinful nature is the same way; it says: “We are – fortunately! – just a little less susceptible, just a little more resistant, to Satan’s traps.”

But instead, we are so much like Peter! This week we read: *Simon? You’re sleeping! Could you not keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray!* And we fall asleep, too!—not physically, but spiritually. The fact that Satan or one of his servants is lurking around every corner—we don’t even think about that! The fact that every sin Satan causes, every sin we commit, is cause for unending condemnation—we don’t even think about that! And so, we follow him—like sheep to the slaughter!

### **Appropriation Two: Jesus Suffered For Us—As For Peter**

But what’s Jesus doing? Ah: while we sleep spiritually, his spirit is shouldering our suffering for us! He marches, like a sheep to the slaughter—for you!

*He begins to be deeply distressed and troubled:* “overwhelmed with distress”—because he is starting to suffer your damnation! *My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death:* “full to death from grief”, he says—because God is going to go down to his grave for you!

*Take this cup from me,* he says—but he ends up drinking it: all the poison from our trespasses, all the gruel from our transgressions. And instead, he puts in our hands the cup of his sweet sacrifice—and fills our senses and warms our hearts with love that drives out sin.

In the end: *the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners*—his innocent life in place of our guilty one, his bitter death in place of ours, and later: his resurrection, guaranteeing our own.

Wow! That will make me sleep better tonight!

### **Application Three: We Want Alertly To Serve Jesus—As Would Peter**

And when I wake up in the morning, I’m going to find it harder to worry about having enough money to live. If Christ loves me this much, won’t he take care of my and my family’s needs?

And when I wake up in the morning, I’m going to find it harder to feel small and need to tear down others in order to build myself up. If Christ loves me this much, isn’t that enough for me—and can’t I demonstrate by my love that he loves others just as much?

And when I wake up in the morning, I’m going to find it harder to get upset and stay upset with others. No matter how much anyone aggravates me, no matter how repeatedly anybody mistreats me, Christ loves me—and finally: I’m going to dwell with him.

### **Conclusion: Your Sleep Is Peaceful**

So, how well do you sleep? Whether you sleep well or not so well, you can (at least) rest peacefully—knowing that you are right in God’s sight permanently. “A clean conscience makes a soft pillow”—and your conscience is clear; Jesus has cleaned it up perfectly. Jesus suffered painful grief, so we could enjoy peaceful sleep—and wake up in the morning (whether in heaven or on earth) ready and eager to serve our Savior! Amen.

As Peter put it, less than two months later: *Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the*

*gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call. Amen.*