

Matthew 26:40

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep,
and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one
hour?

Analysis

Findeth them asleep (εὕρίσκει αὐτοὺς καθεύδοντας, *heuriskei autous katheudontas*)—while Christ agonized under the weight of impending sin-bearing, the disciples slumbered. **What, could ye not watch with me one hour?** (οὐκ ἰσχύσατε μίαν ὥραν γρηγορῆσαι μετ' ἐμοῦ, *ouk ischusate mian hōran grēgorēsai met' emou*)—the question carries both disappointment and gentle rebuke. The word *grēgorēsai* means to 'stay alert, vigilant,' not merely remain awake.

Jesus directs the question specifically to Peter—the same Peter who hours earlier boasted 'Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended' (Matthew 26:33). The contrast is devastating: Peter could not stay alert for one hour, yet Christ would remain faithful through six hours of crucifixion. This scene exposes human weakness and divine strength, our failure and his faithfulness.

Historical Context

The Jewish day was divided into twelve hours of daylight and four night watches of three hours each. Jesus's request for 'one hour' of watchful prayer was minimal—yet the disciples failed even this. This failure foreshadowed Peter's coming denial and the disciples' scattering (Matthew 26:56). The scene occurred during Passover, when Jews commemorated their forefathers' deliverance—yet the disciples slept while the true Passover Lamb prepared for sacrifice.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. Why did Peter, who made the boldest claims of loyalty, receive the sharpest rebuke for sleeping, and what warning does this give about self-confidence?
2. How does the disciples' failure to watch for one hour highlight the truth that salvation depends entirely on Christ's work, not human effort?
3. In what areas of your spiritual life are you 'sleeping' when Christ calls you to watch and pray?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἔρχεται	πρὸς	τοὺς	μαθητὰς	καὶ	εὕρισκει	αὐτοὺς
And	he cometh	unto	G3588	the disciples	And	findeth	them
G2532	G2064	G4314		G3101	G2532	G2147	G846
καθεύδοντας	καὶ	λέγει	τῷ	Πέτρῳ	Οὕτως	οὐκ	ισχύσατε
asleep	And	saith	G3588	unto Peter	What	not	could ye
G2518	G2532	G3004		G4074	G3779	G3756	G2480
μίαν	ὥραν	γρηγορήσαι	μετ'	ἐμοῦ			
G1520	hour	watch	with	me			
	G5610	G1127	G3326	G1700			

Additional Cross-References

Mark 14:37 (References Peter): And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour?

Luke 22:45 (Parallel theme): And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow,

Matthew 26:43 (Parallel theme): And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.

Matthew 26:35 (References Peter): Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

Luke 9:32 (References Peter): But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.

Matthew 25:5 (Parallel theme): While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

Matthew 26:38 (Parallel theme): Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

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