

Matthew 26:44

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

Analysis

And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words (καὶ ἀφεὶς αὐτοὺς πάλιν ἀπελθὼν προσηρύξατο ἐκ τρίτου τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον εἰπών)—The threefold prayer echoes biblical patterns (Paul's thorn, 2 Corinthians 12:8; Elijah raising the widow's son, 1 Kings 17:21). The phrase τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον ('the same word/message') shows Jesus repeated His submission to the Father's will. This wasn't vain repetition (6:7) but persistent wrestling with costly obedience. Each iteration deepened His resolve. The third prayer solidified His commitment to drink the cup—no escape route sought, full acceptance embraced.

The progressive prayers reveal Christ's genuine humanity—He didn't playact human emotion but truly experienced the horror of sin-bearing. Yet His deity never wavered in submission. The pattern (pray, check disciples, return, pray again) shows Jesus's care even in agony—He monitored His friends while bearing the weight of the world's sin. The third prayer completed His preparation; He then moved from petition to action, ready for arrest (26:46).

Historical Context

Rabbinic tradition emphasized threefold prayer repetition for serious matters. Daniel prayed three times daily (Daniel 6:10). Jesus's three prayers weren't mechanical but heartfelt—each deepening His acceptance of the cross. The 'same words' likely means the substance was identical (full submission) even if the exact

wording varied. Between prayers, He returned to the disciples (about a stone's throw away, Luke 22:41), showing pastoral concern even in His darkest hour. The garden's name, Gethsemane ('oil press'), symbolically represents Christ being crushed to provide healing oil.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does persistent prayer about the same issue (when done submissively, not demandingly) deepen your surrender to God's will?
2. What does Jesus's care for sleeping disciples even in His agony teach about pastoral leadership that serves others amid personal suffering?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἀφεὶς	αὐτὸν	ἀπελθὼν	πάλιν	προσηύξατο	ἐκ	
And	he left	the same	and went away	again	and prayed		G1537
G2532	G863	G846	G565	G3825	G4336		

τρίτου	τὸν	αὐτὸν	λόγον	εἰπὼν	
the third time	G3588	the same	words	saying	
G5154		G846	G3056	G2036	

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 12:8 (Parallel theme): For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

Luke 18:1 (Prayer): And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;

