



WILLING SPIRIT, WEAK FLESH

Matthew 26.41

CONTEXT: MATTHEW 26

- Jesus and His disciples eat the Passover meal.
 - Matthew 26.17-25
- Following the meal, Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper.
 - Matthew 26.26-29 (cf. 1 Corinthians 11.25)
- Jesus and the disciples travel to Gethsemane.
 - Matthew 26.36ff

CONTEXT: MATTHEW 26

- Jesus tells the disciples to sit while He, Peter, James, and John travel a little further.
 - Matthew 26.36f
- Jesus then leaves the three behind to “keep watch” while He prays.
 - Matthew 26.38-39
- Jesus returns to His disciples and finds them sleeping.
 - Matthew 26.40-41 (and twice again - 26.42-46)

A WILLING SPIRIT

- What spirit is Jesus describing in Mt. 26.41?
 - Not the Holy Spirit — doesn't fit the context.
 - Holy Spirit always wants us to do X's will (Ga. 5.5,22-25).
 - Not a created spiritual being (cf. Mt. 8.16 for use of the word "spirit") — doesn't fit the context.
- Must be the human spirit:
 - The inward part of man - I Corinthians 2.11
 - Immortal part of man given by God - Eccl. 12.7
 - Similar to "heart" - Psalm 32.2; Proverbs 18.14; 29.23

A WILLING SPIRIT

- **Jesus' disciples wanted to be there for Him:**
 - **Matthew 26.20-22**
 - **Matthew 26.35b**
- **Ultimately, they were not:**
 - **They fell asleep (26.45)**
 - **They fled (26.56)**
- **Why?**

WEAK FLESH

- The disciples wanted to be with Jesus (willing spirit), but they were not *with Him*.
- The events of the past days caught up with them and they were exhausted (Lk. 22.45).
 - Jesus has been talking about dying.
 - He has spoken about leaving them (John 14-17).
 - Their concept of the Messiah is being challenged.
 - They still don't get the whole picture (Jn. 2.22; Acts 1.6).

PRACTICAL POINTS:

- **Rarely are we at our best when we are tired.**
 - **If Jesus needed to take a nap (Mk. 4.38), why wouldn't we?**
 - **Resting isn't laziness.**
- **Desire isn't enough — action and prayer need to be present, as well.**
- **We must not ever look at prayer trivially.**

PRACTICAL POINTS:

- **The struggle of our human experience to meet the ideals of our spirit.**
- **There are times when we must summon the strength to endure the moment's difficulty to achieve what we know is right.**
 - **This was the time for the disciples to prevail over the desires of the flesh — they did not.**
 - **This was the time for Jesus to prevail over the desires of the flesh — He did!**

WILLING SPIRIT, WILLING FLESH

- **Care for my body in such a ways that I can perform when it is necessary.**
- **Forge the inward strength and discipline to overcome when times of trouble appear.**
 - **Consider Daniel — Daniel 1.8**
- **Embrace my emotions and lay my cares before God.**
 - **Consider Jesus — Luke 22.41-45**
- **Trust that Jesus will supply strength for our weakness.**
 - **Consider Paul — 2 Corinthians 12.7-10**
- **Line up with the Spirit (Galatians 5.25).**