

20200405 (Palm Sunday)  
Psalm 31:9-16, Matthew 26:36-46  
Keep Awake with Jesus

## **INTRODUCTION**

1 Movie, Clear and Present danger (1994)

CIA Analyst Jack Ryan is drawn into an illegal war fought by the US government against a Colombian drug cartel. Caught in a web of conspiracies, Ryan must now risk his life and his career in order to bring the perpetrators to justice.

2 Jesus, Clear and Present danger

Jesus Christ was drawn into a war against the leaders of the Jewish establishment. They realized that he threatened their power. Caught in a web of conspiracies, Jesus had to risk his life in order to bring Salvation to the world. Just before facing trial and execution, Jesus went with his disciples to Gathesemane to pray.

What does the Gathesemane experience teach us when we are going through a clear and present danger, the COVID-19 outbreak?

## **BODY**

**1 It is a time of fear.**

1.1 Troubled Jesus

In Gathesemane Jesus began to be “sorrowful” and “troubled.” He told his disciples: “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.” (v.37)

He was so vulnerable that he was depending on the support of his disciples in his most difficult time. He was extremely troubled that he felt he might die there and then.

1.2 Troubled me

Have you ever felt the same way under mental, emotional, and physical stress?

I'd had a flu like symptom including fever, cough and sore throat. I called 811 on Saturday, March 28. They arranged me to the assessment centre on Sunday, March 29 at 8 am. I made myself isolated from my family, using a separated room and a washroom. I was overwhelmed by anxiety that night.

**2 It is a time of prayer.**

2.1. Prayer of Jesus

In Gathesemane Jesus poured out that sorrow to God. His prayer was remarkable for its straightforward honesty. “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will” (v.39).

2.2 My prayer

I have known people who prayed for a dreadful future to go away. That's is honest prayer. I started to pray, “Lord, what if it turns out to be COVID-19? What about my family? What about my ministry? If it is possible, please make my test result negative.” I didn't finish my prayer like Jesus though, “Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

### **3 It is a time of support.**

#### **3.1 Support of his disciples**

Jesus went into this darkest hour of his life with his close friends: Peter and the two sons of Zebedee.

He asked them, "Stay here and keep watch with me." (v. 38)

After his first time of prayer, Jesus returned to them and found them sleeping. Thus, he urged them again to watch and pray (v. 41). They might have stayed awake and prayed for a while. But it was the night and therefore no surprise they were tired and fell asleep although Jesus needed their support most.

#### **3.2 Support of my family**

I was troubled. I needed support. I told my family to keep watch and pray with me.

My wife had prepared meal that night and my son delivered it where I could pick up safely (6 feet away).

Later at night, I was reading Psalm 10 and praying according to the Psalm. I found my family watching TV and playing games (Later they told me they had prayed...). It was no surprise they were so bored. But I needed them to keep awake spiritually with me.

### **CONCLUSION**

The recent words of Nova Scotia Premier Stephen McNeil were "to stay the blazes home."

"I'm so tired of hearing of grocery stores, Walmart, Tim Hortons parking lots filled with cars as if we're not in the midst of a deadly pandemic — we are... All we have to do is stay the blazes home."

The last words of Jesus in Gethesmane were "Rise, let us go! Here comes my betrayer!" (v. 46).

In the midst of this time of fear and anxiety Jesus is reminding us to pray and be bold in faith and in action according to God's will.

Thanks be to God! Amen.