

Missed Opportunities

“So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing. Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, ‘Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners.

Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

Matthew 26:44-46 (NIV)

Sorrow—combined with a weary spirit—masks opportunities better than almost anything else. When grief visits us we soon tire and want to sleep on the job. The night Jesus was betrayed the eleven apostles went with Him to the Garden of Gethsemane. There Jesus confessed how trying the situation was. He told them the issue was killing Him. He asked them to watch and pray while He went alone farther into the garden to pray. In Mark 14:40 we read that the disciples were out of their depth. Confusion and misunderstanding reigned in their hearts and minds as they heard how trying our Lord’s situation was.

Three times the Lord found the disciples sleeping instead of praying. How sorrowful He must have been—for He desperately needed prayer support and help in bearing the burden of the cross and all it entailed. Search the Scriptures and look for any other

place where Jesus was under great pressure and perhaps only in John 11 did Jesus ask for help. There He called on the people to roll the stone away from the tomb of Lazarus before He resurrected him.

This was an opportunity of the greatest importance and the apostles were blinded by their own difficulties and so missed the opportunity of a lifetime.

You may have discovered after the fact that—in your own situation—you missed opportunities to witness, help someone in pain, or gently lift up the downcast. Was it when you were in the hospital as a patient that you missed a great opportunity to witness and give glory to God? Or, as a visitor at the hospital did you ignore the patient in the bed beside your loved one and not offer to pray with them or even speak a word of cheer?

One thing is certain, you cannot rewrite the past—but you certainly can do a lot to shape the future. Do not dwell on missed opportunities, rather go and search out opportunities to be of service to the Lord. Pay attention to the world around you and prayerfully live your days in expectation of times when you can bring praise to the Lord by what you do or refrain from doing.

There are plenty of opportunities in your future to honour the Lord and bring praise to His name by following close to the Good Shepherd. Go out and actively seek situations where you may minister grace into the lives of others. You will know the joy of the Lord as you work in this manner.

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