***Matthew 26:40-41 Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? 41Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”***

Today, we are with Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. The last supper is finished. Judas is in the process of betraying. Peter has made his bold claims. Our Savior is deeply sorrowful and distressed. The disciples have arrived at the garden and Jesus takes three, Peter, James, and John, further along. We can imagine that these three see the sorrow and the distress in the Savior’s face. He leaves them and goes on, Luke 22:41 tells us, a stone’s throw further, meaning a short distance. Before going, Jesus asks these three to “stay here and watch.” Into this dark night, filled with sorrow and stress, we step. Remember with me that Peter earlier said, “*Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!*”. Recall that James and John said earlier in Matthew 20, when asked if they could drink of the cup that Jesus would drink, they boldly answered, “*We are able*.” These three are now asked simply to stay awake and watch. Be alert in this time.

Verse 40 starts - *Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping.* Jesus has gone and prayed and now He has come back. Many receive the fact that He found them sleeping to be a sign of laziness, but we know that sleep is often a reaction to deep sorrow or stress. In fact, Luke 22:45 tells us, “*He found them sleeping from sorrow.*” They’d prepared the last supper, experienced the washing of feet, heard Jesus speak of His coming betrayal, learned that one of their own group will be the betrayer, and seen their Friend and Teacher deeply distressed. It’s not hard to imagine this heaviness of eyes comes from stress and sorrow, just as Luke says.

Verse 40 finishes, *and said to Peter, “What! Could you not watch with Me one hour?”* When the disciples are commanded to watch, it means to be vigilant and alert, stay awake. We are called as Christian’s to watch! Not just watch the news and give God a report, but watch our brothers and sisters, watch our neighbors, watch what is going on around us, being alert and vigilant and standing ready to help and serve. Notice Jesus addresses Peter, who said, “Even if I must die”. Could you not be vigilant even for one hour? Let’s not take this as a specific hour in time, but that the time of Jesus’ betrayal is at hand. John 2 *My hour has not yet come*.

Likewise, Jesus calls us to watch, be vigilant, in this short time that we have to serve. So many sleep, thinking their hours to be many, but the hour may be close at hand. Our life is a vapor, a mist, fading quickly, as the green grass in the high summer heat. How will Jesus find us when He comes? Luke 12 tells us the wise and faithful servant will be found working, waiting, watching… eager for the Master’s return… pressing forward for the Kingdom, even in stressful and sorrowful times. Arms not folded, but hands at work. May He find us behaving just so.

Verse 41 begins - *Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.*Two of the most sacred charges Christian’s are given are to Watch, be alert and vigilant, and Pray, stay in unceasing contact with God. Seek God’s divine protection and guidance that we may not fall into temptation. Imagine the temptation of the coming hour Jesus speaks of! The temptation to flee during the crucifixion, when the persecution of the church begins and adversity presses in.

Likewise, we watch and pray. The Master may not have yet appeared, yet we watch and work until the day of His appearing. We press forward, even as the world resists and denies. The temptation to flee, the attractiveness of giving up, the siren song of doubt and discouragement; yet, we set our faces as flint, knowing the days that we can serve our Lord are drawing to a close. No matter our age, our hour, in eternal terms, is close at hand. How are we serving?

Verse 41 ends *The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.* Jesus rebukes so gently here. He knows the disciples’ hearts, yet He understands the flesh. He is fully Man, fully God. Peter denied three times the One he said he’d die for. James and John slept, though they’d claimed to be ready for the baptism Jesus faced. Their spirit was ready and eager, yet their flesh was weak. Their spirit knew what the Master expected, but their flesh resisted.

Likewise, we often, from a place of spirit, through Jesus, eagerly recognize His call on our lives. We understand the service we’re called to. Yet, our flesh resists. What we want to do, we don’t do. What we hate, we do. As the Apostle Paul admits in Romans 7:15. Spirit calls us to a higher place! Sin winds ropes around us and pulls us down. The question becomes: will we enter into the temptation of allowing sin to pull us to the ground or will we rise in the spirit and press toward the Kingdom above? Excuses are the ropes sin is casting. What excuses have we allowed to secure us and pull us away from accomplishing God’s purpose in our lives?

This week, our spirit is willing. This world is sorrowful. Our eyes may be heavy with sorrow; yet, we are commanded to watch and pray, to be wise and faithful servants, because the hour is coming when our opportunities will cease. Will spirit control our resources, talents, time, and love leading to impact for the Kingdom of God? Or will flesh, with sin roping us to the world, be in control? The spirit indeed is willing. Are we vigilant and alert, seeking opportunities to serve? Are we denying the flesh? Jesus commands it. How will He find us when we hear His knock upon our door?