

SESSION SEVEN

THE WEIGHT OF THE WORLD

Which words would you use to describe what sin feels like? In contrast, how would you describe what it feels like to be forgiven?

DVD Teaching Notes (19 minutes)

Symbolism of the olives

A gethsemane (olive press)

The curse

The importance of producing fruit

Opening Thoughts (4 minutes)

The Very Words of God

He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53:5 - 6

Think About It

Sin has an impact we can feel. We may feel guilty, wounded, or fearful because of sin, and we often describe those feelings in physical terms such as being crushed, weighed down, or suffocated.

DVD Discussion (7 minutes)

1. Capernaum was home for Jesus during much of his ministry. What did you learn about this town that helps you to better understand Jesus' pronouncement of judgment when its people rejected his message and refused to repent?
2. What new spiritual insight into the symbolism of the olive tree or its oil did you discover, and what does it mean to you?
3. Describe Jesus' state of mind before he was arrested in Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives.

What was the "weight" on him? Why was he so sorrowful?

As you consider all that was going through Jesus' mind that night, in which ways do you think his mind-set differed from that of his disciples?

Small Group Bible Discovery and Discussion (18 minutes)

Jesus Prays in Anguish in Gethsemane

The olive press — the gethsemane — symbolizes the agonizing weight of our sin that Jesus willingly carried when he was crucified. Our sins are like the big stone slabs in the olive press that forced the oil out of the olives. Our guilt and the required penalty for sin were great, but Jesus' love for us and his obedient devotion to his Father's will were greater, so he bore that burden for us. Despite the crushing burden of sorrow, loss, and pain he felt, Jesus submitted completely to his Father's will.

The details of what happened in Gethsemane are revealed by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Read each of these accounts, then discuss the following questions. (See Matthew 26:36 - 46; Mark 14:32 - 42; Luke 22:39 - 46.)

1. How troubled was Jesus, and what two things did he want his disciples to do? (See Matthew 26:36 - 38, 40 - 41; Mark 14:33 - 34; Luke 22:40, 46.)

Why would this have been important to Jesus, and how do you think faithful obedience to Jesus at that time would have benefitted his disciples?

2. What was Jesus asking in his prayers, and what do they reveal about his relationship with God the Father? (See Matthew 26:39, 42; Mark 14:35 - 36; Luke 22:42.)

What do these prayers show you about God's love for us, and what does that mean to you?

How do you think Jesus' prayers would have affected his disciples if they had been awake and watchful?

What might have been the consequences of their failure to keep watch and pray?

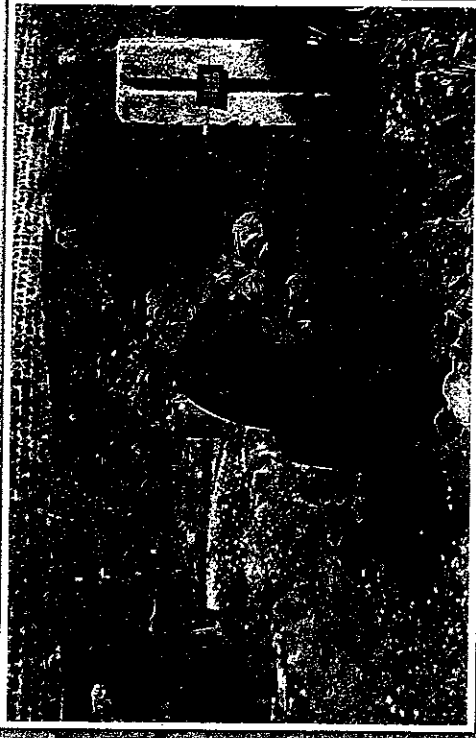
3. Which temptations might Jesus have faced that night, and how was he strengthened for what he soon faced? (See Luke 22:43 - 44.)

DATA FILE

Gethsemane—A word derived from two Hebrew words: *gat*, which means "a place for pressing oil (or wine)" and *she-manim*, which means "oils." During Jesus' time, heavy stone slabs were lowered onto baskets of olives that had already been crushed in an olive crusher. Gradually the weight of the slabs squeezed the oil out of the olive pulp, and the oil ran into a pit. There the oil was collected in clay jars.

The image of the gethsemane on the slope of the Mount of Olives where Jesus went the night before his crucifixion provides a vivid picture of Jesus' suffering. The weight of the sins of the world pressed down on him like a heavy slab of rock pressed down on olives in their baskets. His sweat, "like drops of blood falling to the ground" (Luke 22:44), flowed from him like olive oil as it was squeezed out and flowed into the pit of an olive press.

Olive Crusher—The large, round stone basin used to crush olives into pulp. Ripe olives were placed into the basin, which also contained a millstone to crush the olives. A donkey, or sometimes people, pushed on a horizontal beam that rolled the millstone around the basin, crushing the olives. An olive crusher was often placed in a cave, where the moderated temperature improved the efficiency of oil production.



AN OLIVE PRESS

Memorize

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

1 Peter 2:24