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## Expository Sermon

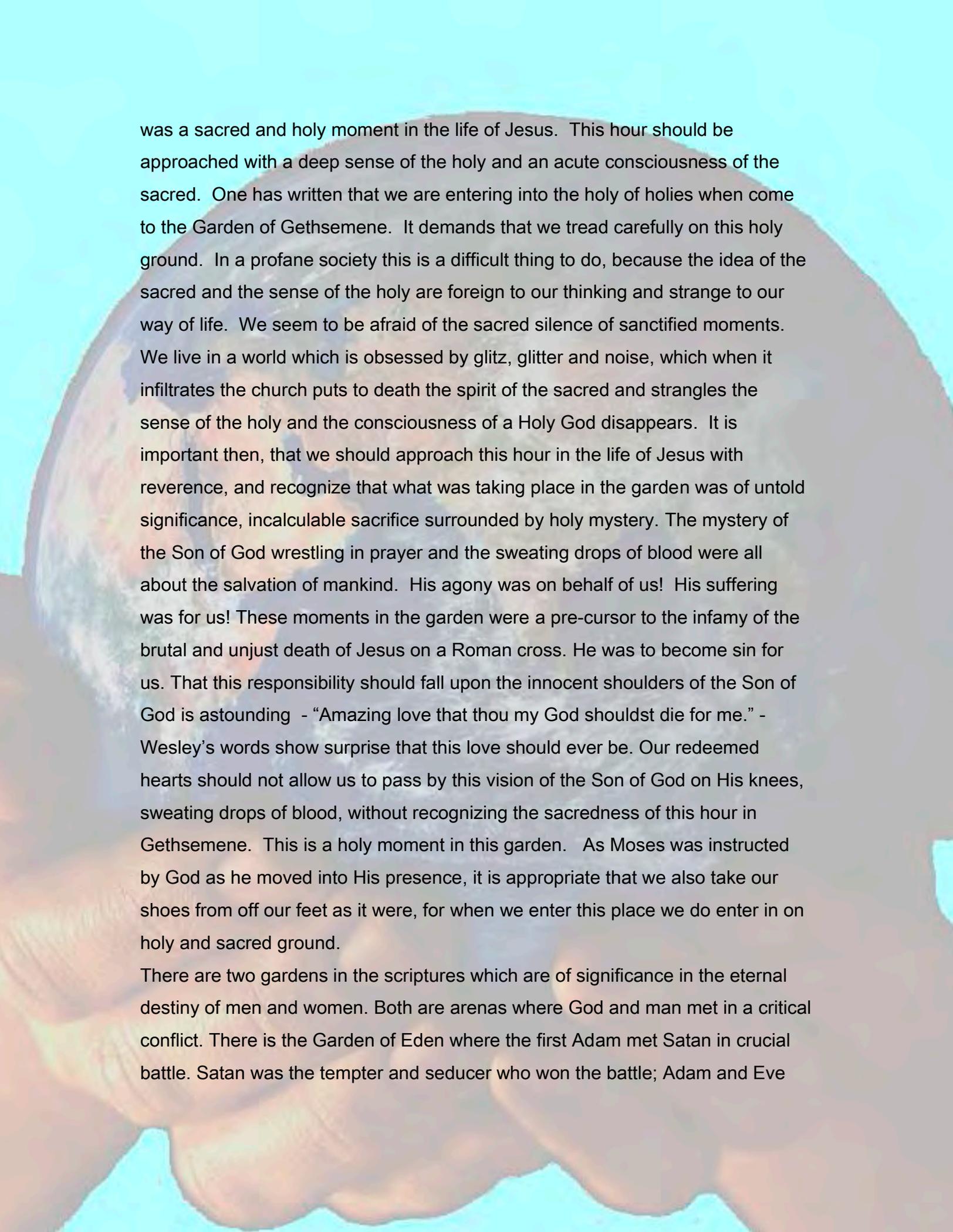
### AN EASTER WEEKEND MEDITATION

**“THE HOUR HAS COME.....!”**

**Scripture Reading – Matthew 26:36-46.**

#### **Introduction**

There is the sense of destiny in the words of Jesus when He said to His disciples in verse 45 “Look the hour is near....” There was always in Jesus the consciousness of the approach of the hour of His death. He spoke about this hour through out His life on earth. To His mother at the wedding feast at Cana of Galilee He said “The hour is not yet.” John 2:3. In the Temple His enemies tried to arrest Him but the Word tells that no man laid a hand on Him because “His hour had not yet come.” John 7:30. As He drew near to the appointed time for His crucifixion he said “The hour is come that the Son of Man must be glorified.” John 12:23. The glorification of Jesus was part of His death on the Cross. It was a sorrowful Jesus who said on one occasion “My heart is troubled, and what shall I say Father save me from this hour? Referring to His death He continued “No, it was for this very reason that I came to this hour. Father glorify your name.” John 12:27-28. After wrestling in agony with the forces of darkness in the Garden of Gethsemene, He said to His disciples “the hour is near, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners arise and let us go.” Matthew 26:45-46. This



was a sacred and holy moment in the life of Jesus. This hour should be approached with a deep sense of the holy and an acute consciousness of the sacred. One has written that we are entering into the holy of holies when we come to the Garden of Gethsemane. It demands that we tread carefully on this holy ground. In a profane society this is a difficult thing to do, because the idea of the sacred and the sense of the holy are foreign to our thinking and strange to our way of life. We seem to be afraid of the sacred silence of sanctified moments. We live in a world which is obsessed by glitz, glitter and noise, which when it infiltrates the church puts to death the spirit of the sacred and strangles the sense of the holy and the consciousness of a Holy God disappears. It is important then, that we should approach this hour in the life of Jesus with reverence, and recognize that what was taking place in the garden was of untold significance, incalculable sacrifice surrounded by holy mystery. The mystery of the Son of God wrestling in prayer and the sweating drops of blood were all about the salvation of mankind. His agony was on behalf of us! His suffering was for us! These moments in the garden were a pre-cursor to the infamy of the brutal and unjust death of Jesus on a Roman cross. He was to become sin for us. That this responsibility should fall upon the innocent shoulders of the Son of God is astounding - "Amazing love that thou my God shouldst die for me." - Wesley's words show surprise that this love should ever be. Our redeemed hearts should not allow us to pass by this vision of the Son of God on His knees, sweating drops of blood, without recognizing the sacredness of this hour in Gethsemane. This is a holy moment in this garden. As Moses was instructed by God as he moved into His presence, it is appropriate that we also take our shoes from off our feet as it were, for when we enter this place we do enter in on holy and sacred ground.

There are two gardens in the scriptures which are of significance in the eternal destiny of men and women. Both are arenas where God and man met in a critical conflict. There is the Garden of Eden where the first Adam met Satan in crucial battle. Satan was the tempter and seducer who won the battle; Adam and Eve

were deceived by him, and they partook of the forbidden fruit. The issue was the conflict between the will of man and the will of God. Victory in the conflict with Satan is dependent on the response of obedience to the full will of God. Adam disobeyed and brought sin upon the human race. Paul latches on to this event and writing to the church in Rome the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter and the 19<sup>th</sup> verse says “For just as through the disobedience of one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of one man, the many will be made righteous.” That one man, the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul calls the second Adam. The obedience of the second Adam was to restore and redeem that which that which was lost through the disobedience of the first Adam. In the Garden of Gethsemene we find Him embarking on final stage of His mission. A battle for the souls of men and women took place there. It was crucial moment. The hour had come for the “Son of Man to be lifted up on the Cross for you and for me.” His prayer reveals the immensity of what He decided to do for the human race.’ My Father if it is possible may this cup pass from me. Yet not as I will.” And He drank that cup to its bitter dregs. What was involved in this critical hour? It was,

### **1. THE HOUR OF INTENSE SOLITUDE. Matthew 26:42**

This hour about which He spoke was the hour of loneliness. “Father if it possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, your will be done.” The words “except I drink it....” express a profound loneliness about Jesus; a loneliness which the common man would never experience. It was the loneliness of the task that God had given Him to do.

One of the striking features of the life of Jesus was that the shadow of a haunting loneliness dogged his trail in life. He Himself that the “foxes have holes and the birds have nests but the Son of Man has no where to lay His head.” But as the Cross cast its ominous shadows across His pathway, the consciousness of that loneliness is reflected in His words to His disciples, “ a time is coming, and has come when you will be scattered, each to His own home. You will leave me alone.” John 16:31. And in the Garden of Gethsemene He wrestles with the powers of darkness with the drops of blood falling from His face, and discovered that those

who were closest to Him were oblivious of it. While He suffered, they slept – In his solitude they slumbered. One can hear the pain in His words when He asked His disciples, “could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?” When He needed the assurance of their presence and strength of their support, He found Himself facing His ordeal alone. But there is a deeper loneliness.. He prays to His Father that the cup might be taken from Him and if it was not possible unless He drank it, He would fulfill the Fathers will. The words “**unless I drink it,**” reveal intensity about this kind of loneliness. When Jesus brings the “I” into His prayer of surrender, we begin to realize that He alone is going to drink this cup. In fact it is He and He alone, who is qualified to drink this cup. This was a lonely moment and a lonely task. Who will share this burden with Him? Who can endure this agony with Him? Who can bear the world’s sin with Him? There is no one who can carry the Cross for Him. In the darkest hours of His wrenching agony, the impact of the naked loneliness of the man Christ Jesus, is gathered to together in that heart rending cry which cut across Calvary’s brow, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” This is a one of the profound mysteries of Cross. It’s the mystery of the awful loneliness of the Son of God. These are holy moments and we must walk discreetly and reverently in the shadow of them with our shoes from off our feet, as Moses did when he approached the Presence of God in a burning bush. The story is that Jesus drank the cup of loneliness to its bitter dregs. What was the reason for this loneliness? It lies in two truths. He was lonely because of,

**a. The Nature of His Person. Matthew 26:42.** This loneliness plagued Him because of who He was. He was a man, that is true, but He was more than a man. He was the God-man. And He knew loneliness because of who He was. Notice who He addresses in His prayer, for He prays “**MY FATHER....**” It is the expression of a unique relationship with God. Jesus had clearly said on one occasion “My Father and I are one; He that has seen me has seen the Father.” This is God in Christ in the Garden. He walks on this earth hand in hand with loneliness because of who He is. We do not deny that identified Himself with

man when He became man, it is also true that He is exalted above men in His holiness and His deity because He is God. In this latter sense Jesus was lonely among men. He was lonely because of who He was. He experienced solitude because of the nature of His person. He was also lonely because of,

**b. The Nature of His Purposes. Matthew 26:42.** He was lonely because of what He had to do. His mission on earth was important in the purposes of God for the salvation of the world. The purpose of His coming was to drink the cup that His Father had given. The cup was the Cross and it was central in His life. He had committed Himself to it. He set His face as a flint towards Jerusalem the place of His crucifixion, and He took deliberate steps towards it. Even those who were closest to Him misunderstood what He was about in the world. The reason for their misunderstanding was that they had

**i. An Earth Centered Mindset.** They were bound by the limited thinking of this world. Their thinking was rooted in worldliness. They conceived of Jesus moving at the head of an army, to set up a materialistic kingdom with materialistic purposes and values. They expected Him to restore the glory and power of the reign of David. They anticipated that He would smash the yoke of the Roman Empire and set Israel free. Even after Jesus had risen from the dead they still misunderstood, for they asked when He would restore the Kingdom to Israel. When He talked about His kingdom their faces were alight with joy and eager anticipation. But when He talked about His purpose and His mission in terms of suffering, humiliation and death, their faces were sad. They rejected His Calvary but clamored for His kingdom. They did not want His passion they wanted His power. They did not want His cross they wanted His crown. Their thinking was as the world thinks. Christianity is counter cultural. And the purposes of Jesus ran counter to their purposes. They had an earth centered mind set. They also had,

**ii. Self Centered Mindset.** There were those in that little band of disciples who sought after the chief places in Christ's kingdom. They were places of honor and power. One wanted to sit on the left hand and the other on the right hand of the throne of Jesus when He came into His Kingdom. Their ambition was to rule in

the Kingdom over others and not share it with them. They were more concerned about position in the kingdom than they were about the purposes of the Kingdom. They were working for their glory in the kingdom without regard for the Kingdom itself. The tragedy is that there are those in the Church of Christ who have this mindset. They work for position in the Body of Christ. If they are not satisfied because what they want is not being given and they create a disturbance in the Body. Self centeredness is sin and it asserts itself as a damaging force in community of believers. Peter the Great said "I have conquered an empire but I have not been able to conquer myself." Charles Spurgeon wrote that "there are two sins of man that are bred in the bone and that continually come out in the flesh. The one is self-dependence and the other is self-exaltation." They have no place in the church because Jesus totally rejected this kind of spirit in His Kingdom, because His Kingdom is not of this world. Hear me very clearly. The cross is a monument to the crucifixion of self not the exaltation of it and certainly not the promotion of it. The philosophy, the values and the mindset of His kingdom runs counter to that of the world. He exemplified the true spirit of His Kingdom, when He took a towel and washed His disciple's feet. The King of Kings washing His disciple's feet. Surely this is a spirit of another world. Men want to be power mongers not feet washers. But this man Jesus, the Son of God Himself, is seen washing His follower's feet. He lived what he taught for He said "I came not to be served but to serve and give my life a ransom for many." This principle is not only the basis of Christ's Kingdom it is the essence of it. It is not what we gain in the Kingdom, but what we give to it that is central. It is not that we promote and exalt ourselves; it is that we promote and exalt God. This is the code and the ethic of Kingdom living. But his disciples misunderstood this. The disciples did not comprehend His purpose, for it is foreign to the thinking of the world. That is why Jesus walked a lonely road to the Cross. "My Father if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done." This was the hour of intense solitude. It was also,

**2. THE HOUR OF CONFIRMED SURRENDER. Matthew 26:42.**

**We come to the heart beat this great prayer.** “Yet,” he prayed, “not as I will but as you will.” These are powerful words. This was not an initial surrender on the part of Jesus. He was confirming His position and re-affirming His surrender to His Father’s will. What He was saying so forcefully was, “Father if it is possible I want to avoid this cup. Let it pass me by, yet if it is not possible, let me confirm and affirm that it is your will that I supremely desire. There are two specific ingredients that make up substance of this prayer. They make this prayer credible and effective. Notice first,

**a. The Willingness of His Surrender. Matthew 26:42.** “Not as I will but as you will.....” There is nothing clearer than this prayer. The power of the prayer lies in the fact that Jesus knew the horrific meaning of the drinking of the cup. His pure soul shrank from it. The sinless one recoiled from this repulsive task. Sinful man would not understand the horror of what Jesus faced. He who knew no sin would naturally pray that this cup would pass Him by. Jesus inserts a little word that changes the complexion and direction of His prayer. It is the word **“YET.”** I pray that the cup may pass from me **“YET”** not my will but yours be done. Remove that word and the world would be plunged into a despairing and deep darkness. Upon that word hangs your eternal destiny and mine alike. He prayed “Yet not as I will but as you will.” And the plan of salvation was sealed. That is how He lived! His Father’s will was paramount in the whole of His life. His was a God-centered life for it was written of Him in the scriptures “I delight to do your will O God.” It was a self-emptying life.” For He said, “I do nothing of myself. I do always those things that please Him.” It was a life of sacrificial service to others. “The Son of Man can not to be served but to serve and give His life a ransom for many.” The life of Jesus was a self-less, self-giving, self-denying, self emptying and self-sacrificing life. He exemplified a responsive willingness to do the Will of His Father. The difficulty of drinking this cup of anguish did not quench the willingness of His Son to do what the Father had planned for Him to do. His was a willing surrender. His willing surrender gave birth to,

**b. The Completeness of His Self-less Sacrifice. Matthew 26:42. Not as I will but as you will.** The perfection and completeness of His surrender is clear when He looks into the Face of His Father and confirms His total surrender to doing His Father's will. "Not as I will but as you will." When self surrenders all to God, that is a complete surrender. **While He wrestled with all that HIS FATHER'S WILL MEANT for Him there was a blending with it. It was not confrontation but conformity! Not separation synchronization! There was the perfect identification of the Will of the Son of God with the Will of God the Father.** This is surrender without conditions, and consequently it is a complete surrender. This hour in the Garden of Gethsemane **is the hour of the confirmed surrender of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

### **3. THE HOUR OF SELF-LESS SACRIFICE Matthew 26:42**

His prayer reaches a high note when He says "May the cup pass from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." May this cup pass from me?" That is the desire of the Son of God. "Not as I will." That is His determination. His personal desire gave way to a self-less determination to do His Father's will. And that meant the sacrifice of Himself. The Apostle Paul in the second chapter of Philipians, details the self-sacrifice of Jesus. His statements are striking and startling giving insight as who Jesus is and what He did when He came to this earth. Philipians 2:7. "He made Himself nothing." And again in verse 7, "He took the nature of servant." In v.8 "He humbled Himself." Again in verse 8 "He became obedient to death, even the death of the Cross." There is nothing in these statements which indicate that Jesus was committing Himself to success in our world. The world would look at Him and He set aside and writes Him off as a failure. Dietrich Bonhoeffer who suffered persecution and death at the hands of the Nazis wrote, **"The figure of the Crucified invalidates all thought which takes success for its standards."** To man a bleeding victim on a Roman Cross was the epitome of failure. That is where the will of His Father took Him. But success in the light of eternity and in the eyes of God is a full surrender and self less sacrifice to the will

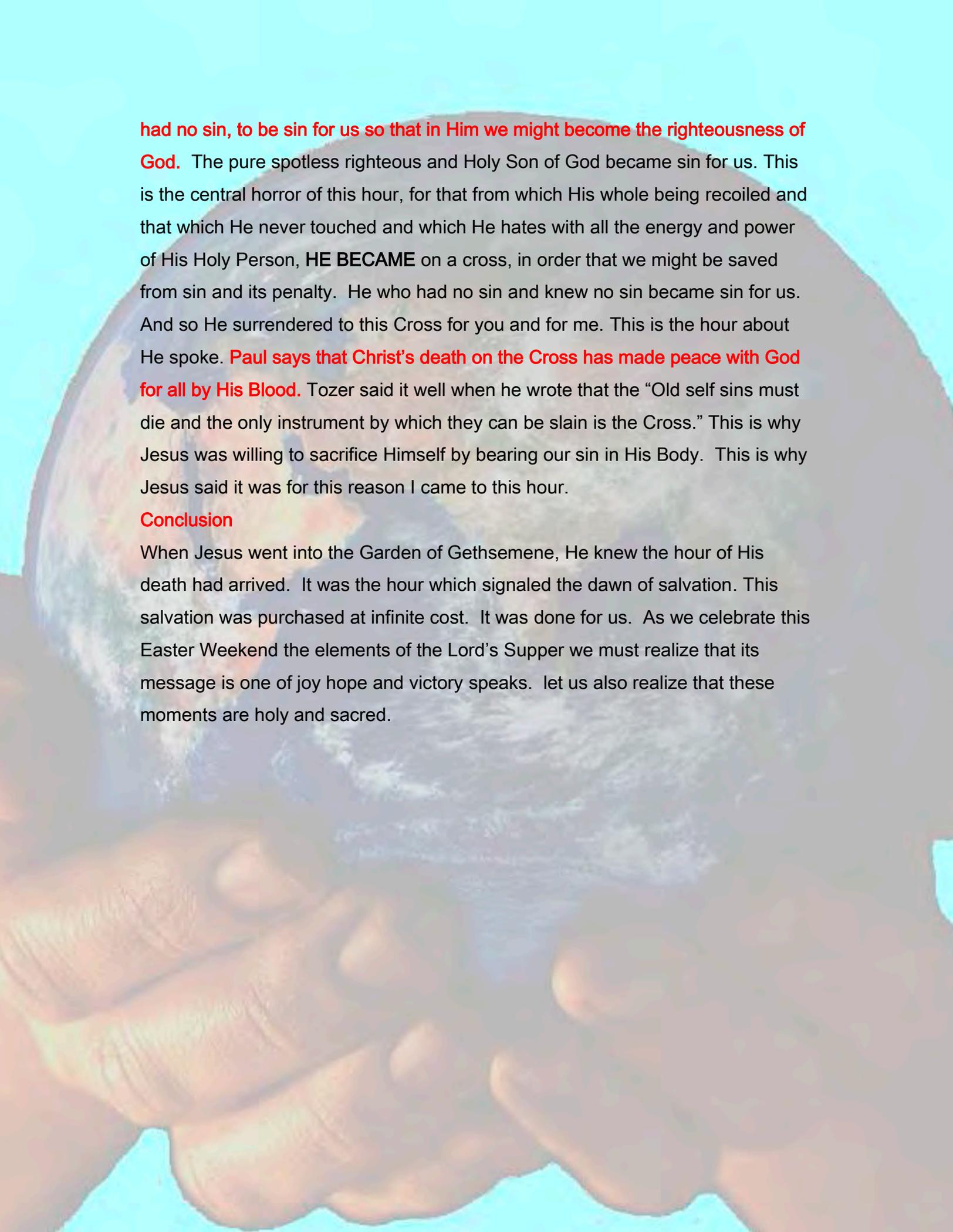
of God no matter where it leads. Let us take a look at this picture of the crucified one and see what was involved in His selfless sacrifice. Note first of all,

**a. The Shame He Endured. Matthew 26:42. Phil 2:7-8.** That cup meant indescribable shame. **His act of becoming man was an act humiliation.** “He took,” wrote Paul, “the very nature of a servant being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself.” His act of becoming a man was humiliating. In becoming a man, He suffered ridicule and the rejection of men. The Jews scorned Him. Herod set him at naught. The soldiers flogged Him. The Romans crucified Him. The prophetic word declared concerning Him “He offered His back to those who beat Him and His cheeks to those who pulled out His beard. He did not hide His face from mocking or spitting.” While the cross may adorn the walls of cathedrals, it was once the death bed of the criminal. It was the object of shame and humiliation, and it was offensive to the Jew. Even the Law of Moses said “cursed is everyone who hangs on tree.” This hour was the enduring of shame. It also spoke of,

**b. The Sorrow He Experienced. Matthew 26: 38, 42.** “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.....” Dare we approach Him in this moment? At this point we stand on holy ground. The curtains are drawn back briefly so that we are able to get a fleeting glimpse of this deep emotion in Jesus, as He faced the ordeal of the Cross. In this hour the words of the prophet come to mind, “thy rebuke has broken His heart. He is full of heaviness and see of there be any sorrow like unto His. He is a man of sorrows and familiar with grief.” He drank the cup of grief and sorrow for us. The hour of His self-sacrifice is climaxed by,

**c. The Sin He Bore. Matthew 26:39. This was the bitterest dreg of the cup He drank.** He came to redeem men and women from their sin. The Cross was the only way this could happen. A.W. Tozer wrote, “Sin demands an answer. It won’t just go away. It must be carried away by redeeming Blood; redeeming blood was never shed by any other Lamb except the Lamb of God.” The writer to the Hebrews tells us that “Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.”

Hebrews 9:28. **Let me remind you that Paul declared that “God made Him who**



had no sin, to be sin for us so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. The pure spotless righteous and Holy Son of God became sin for us. This is the central horror of this hour, for that from which His whole being recoiled and that which He never touched and which He hates with all the energy and power of His Holy Person, **HE BECAME** on a cross, in order that we might be saved from sin and its penalty. He who had no sin and knew no sin became sin for us. And so He surrendered to this Cross for you and for me. This is the hour about He spoke. **Paul says that Christ's death on the Cross has made peace with God for all by His Blood.** Tozer said it well when he wrote that the "Old self sins must die and the only instrument by which they can be slain is the Cross." This is why Jesus was willing to sacrifice Himself by bearing our sin in His Body. This is why Jesus said it was for this reason I came to this hour.

### **Conclusion**

When Jesus went into the Garden of Gethsemene, He knew the hour of His death had arrived. It was the hour which signaled the dawn of salvation. This salvation was purchased at infinite cost. It was done for us. As we celebrate this Easter Weekend the elements of the Lord's Supper we must realize that its message is one of joy hope and victory speaks. let us also realize that these moments are holy and sacred.