**A Stone’s Throw, Yet So Far**

*Luke 22:39-46*

**Introduction**

1. We have all experienced frustrations in relationships we’ve had where one is close to us in physical distance, but their mind is far off elsewhere.
   1. We appreciate their bodily presence – perhaps in a time of distress and hardship, or even in a time of joy – but we long for something more.
   2. In addition to them sitting in the room with us we want them to be engaged in what we’re engaged.
   3. We want their focus to be on what we are most concerned with at the moment – either to share the experience, or simply to have one there in totality that we might not feel so alone.
   4. However, there are times when, although the person may be in the same room or even sitting directly adjacent to us, they are disengaged and uninterested, and as a result we are actually left alone.
2. **Luke 22:39-46** describes such a time when Jesus was only “a stone’s throw” away from Peter, James, and John, yet in actuality they were miles away.
3. We must not be making the same mistake that these three made – in appearance being fairly close to Jesus, but in actuality being lightyears away.
4. The Distance in the Garden
5. Three Trusted Disciples
   1. **Matthew 26:36-37; Mark 14:32-33** – 8 disciples remained at the entrance of Gethsemane, but Peter, James and John (sons of Zebedee) went further with Jesus.
      1. James and John – **Matthew 20:20-24** – desired prominence in the kingdom, and were confident in their ability to suffer for Jesus.
         1. Named “Sons of Thunder” – **Mark 3:17** – some conjecture because of their display of zeal.
      2. Peter – **Matthew 26:31-35** – Peter adamantly refused Jesus’ prophecy of his denial, claiming he would never do so.
         1. He is also noted for his immense zeal – **Matthew 14:28-31** – only one to get out of the boat. Often labeled as impetuous.
   2. Peter, James and John also chosen to experience other significant events:
      1. Healing of Jairus’ daughter – **Mark 5:37**
      2. Transfiguration on the mount – **Mark 9:2**
      3. We aren’t told why.
   3. Regardless of why Jesus chose these three men on several occasions, the fact remains they were entrusted again with a solemn occasion with the Lord:
      1. **Luke 22:40-41** – asked them to pray so as to avoid entering temptation while He withdrew to pray.
      2. Matthew and Mark’s account make it clear that this specific request was given to the three.
         1. ***“Sit here while I go and pray over there” (Matthew 26:36)*** or ***“Sit here while I pray” (Mark 14:32***) were spoken to those who remained at the entrance.
         2. Then He went further in to the garden with Peter, James and John.
      3. Matthew shows how personal it was to Jesus that they watch – **Matthew 26:38, 40** – watch with ME.
         1. ﻿McGarvey – “He who had been their comforter in every hour of trouble and danger, now calls on them for the help which their wakeful sympathy would give him in the hour of his agony” (229).” (Kyle Pope. Truth Matthew Commentary (Kindle Locations 20124-20125). Guardian of Truth Foundation. Kindle Edition.)
      4. Additionally, their confident assertion of their ability to endure the baptism of suffering with Jesus was threatened, and vigilant prayer was the only answer – **Luke 22:41**
6. The Distance Greater Than A Stone’s Throw
   1. Luke records that Jesus withdrew from them a distance of a stone’s throw – **Luke 22:41** – this is not that far. THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO HEAR, AND LIKELY SEE JESUS IN HIS AGONY.
      1. **Luke 22:42-44** – His prayer of anguish.
      2. **Hebrews 5:7-8** – vehement cries and tears.
   2. Despite their proximity to Jesus in the garden, and the anguish of the scene, they failed to keep awake:
      1. **Luke 22:45-46** – Jesus showed His disappointment.
      2. **Matthew 26:37-46** – Matthew’s record shows this happened 3 times.
   3. While the three were only a stone’s throw away from Jesus, truly the distance was far greater.
      1. This was His greatest hour of trial!
      2. He was soon to be betrayed, and then crucified, AND THE THREE DISCIPLES HE TRUSTED TO WATCH AND PRAY WITH HIM COULDN’T EVEN STAY AWAKE!
      3. They were there, but they weren’t there.
7. The Distance in Individual Faith
8. A Persistent Sin
   1. It may be that you are doing well in the majority of areas in your faith, but you are continually struggling with one thing.
      1. Some allow themselves to minimize the seriousness of one persistent sin if they are “good” in most other areas.
      2. This is a dangerous thought, for while you may feel close to Jesus, that one sin changes what may seem like “a stone’s throw” into an entire chasm.
   2. Remember that sin separates – **Isaiah 59:2** – even just one. (**cf. 1 John 1:5-6** – in God is NO darkness AT ALL.)
   3. The word can’t save us if we are holding on to even one sin:
      1. **James 1:21** – lay aside the sin so the word can save.
      2. Example of the sin of partiality – **James 2:1-4, 8-11** – they were loving their neighbor when it came to the rich, but not to the poor. (transgressed the whole law and is guilty of all.)
   4. In order to be close to Jesus we must rid ourselves entirely of sin – **1 John 2:2-6, 29** – otherwise what may seem to be “a stone’s throw” is really a giant distance.
9. A Weight That Needs Laying Aside
   1. It may be that you are not actively walking in sins of immorality, and you do have an interest in spiritual things, but you can’t seem to find time for growing your relationship with the Lord.
      1. These are matters that aren’t sinful in themselves but distract us from what is most important.
      2. We can fool ourselves into thinking we are just fine with the Lord, maybe even very close to Him, but truly we are a distance greater than we’d like because we are holding on to matters which are stunting our growth.
   2. Weights, in addition to sins, need laying aside – **Hebrews 12:1-2** (distinction of weight and sin)
      1. **1 Corinthians 6:12** – something lawful that isn’t helpful.
      2. **1 Corinthians 8:8-13** – like eating meats offered to idols, but that might cause a brother to stumble, thus yourself. (Is it worth holding on to?)
   3. The Rich Young Ruler is a classic case of thinking he was closer than he actually was due to a weight – **Matthew 19:16-22**
      1. Jesus knew what his greatest problem was.
      2. It is not unlikely that the man didn’t have a thought about his riches being a problem.
      3. Jesus made it manifest that it was a huge problem.
   4. We need to take inventory of our lives. What consumes our time that can be laid aside for quality time with God – study and prayer.
      1. Is there anything that is distracting us from our relationship with Jesus?
      2. How close are we to Him? How much closer could we be? How could we get there? (Making more slots for Him in our time and activities.)
10. Distracted Worship
    1. It may be that you aren’t forsaking the assembly, and because you show every time you feel you are extremely close to the Lord.
       1. It is important to assemble. (**cf. Hebrews 10:24-25**)
       2. But do you find yourself easily distracted in the assembly? Do you often find your mind elsewhere during worship?
       3. Are you antsy for worship and bible study to end so you can get on with your day/night?
       4. You may not be as close as you think.
    2. Worship is in spirit and truth – **John 4:24** – our worship is not pleasing to God if our hearts aren’t invested in it. (Nor can it be in truth if such is the case.)
    3. It involves our heart – **Ephesians 5:17-21**
       1. Goal – being filled with God’s word in an understanding way.
       2. Contrast – Alcohol causes us to think less, but the Spirit fills our mind with God’s will.
       3. Involvement – the heart is the active instrument. (Mind/will)
       4. Are we engaged? Do we get the message of our song?
    4. The Lord’s Supper is to no avail when our minds are absent:
       1. **1 Corinthians 10:15-17** – we commune, we become one with each other and the Lord during this memorial. This should draw us nearer to Him!
          1. Such is not the case when we are disengaged.
       2. **1 Corinthians 11:22-26** – it is to remember His death; it is not a mindless meal.
       3. **1 Corinthians 11:27-32** – when our minds wonder we cannot possibly discern the body of the Lord, and we harm ourselves spiritually in doing so – sin. While we may think we’re close, we are actually so far away!
    5. We must fight against our minds wondering during worship. We must reject the idea that we are drawing near to Jesus just because we assembled – such is done in the heart!

**Conclusion**

1. Peter, James and John were only a “stone’s throw” away from Jesus in the Garden where He prayed.
2. However, due to their disengaged mind, and uninterested slumber they were actually miles away from the Lord when He needed them most!
3. We can accomplish the same ourselves in various ways if we aren’t careful.
4. How close are you to the Lord? Are you really that close?