**The Distance Greater Than a Stone’s Throw**

*Luke 22:39-46*

**Introduction**

1. **Luke 22:39-46** – describes the gloomy scene of the garden as Jesus prayed before being betrayed.
   1. **(vv. 39-40)** – Matthew and Mark’s record specifies Peter, James and John going further with Him, and these words spoken to these three.
      1. **Matthew 26:36-39; Mark 14:32-35** – told disciples “sit here,” took the 3 further and said “watch and pray,” then went a little further.
      2. **Peter, James, and John** – Part of the inner circle of Jesus’ inner circle – Raising of Jairus’ daughter **(cf. Mark 5:37);** Transfiguration (**cf. Mark 9:2**). (Not told why, but they obviously enjoyed a close relationship with Jesus.)
   2. **(v. 40)** – now, Peter, James and John are given the responsibility to watch and pray while Jesus went to pray.
   3. **(vv. 41-45)** – withdrew a stone’s throw away to pray and returned to find them sleeping.
      1. Matthew records this happening 3 times!
      2. NOTE – the short distance – “about a stone’s throw”
      3. NOTE – the description of Jesus’ prayer – **(v. 44); Hebrews 5:7-8** – not some subtle little prayer.
   4. Yet again, Peter, James and John were given the privilege of proximity to Jesus.
      1. They were able to go further into the garden with them and found themselves but “a stone’s throw” from their Master as He prayed.
      2. YET, while they were physically “a stone’s throw” away from Jesus, there was truly a distance far greater – they did not even do what simple thing Jesus requested, “watch and pray.”
2. Is it possible that we may be further away from Jesus than it may seem? We need to make sure this is not the case.
3. Greater Distances
4. Zeal Without Knowledge (Romans 10:2)
   1. Paul’s description of his erring countrymen – **Romans 10:1-4**
      1. Zeal – *zēlos* – properly, heat, i.e. (figuratively) “zeal” (STRONG)
         1. “intense positive interest in someth., zeal, ardor” (BDAG)
         2. Some say, “on fire for the Lord.”
      2. Not according to knowledge – important, controlling factor.
         1. Their zeal must be actuated by SUBSTANCE OF TRUTH.
         2. I.e. it must not be aimless.
         3. CONSIDER – literal heat – can be very useful when contained and directed, but without control is destructive. (Fire without a fireplace.)
      3. **(v. 3)** – They were zealous for God but did not know God’s will – RESULTED IN OPPOSITION TO GOD.
      4. EXAMPLE:
         1. **John 16:2-3** – think killing disciples of Lord is serving God.
         2. Paul himself – **Acts 26:9-11** – thought he must.
   2. Lacking knowledge – **Hosea 4:6** – destroyed.
      1. But not simply in a context of a rebellious spirit.
      2. Can desire to do good but fail without knowledge.
   3. Jesus’ zeal based in God’s word – **John 2:13-17; Mark 11:17** (***“Is it not written…”***)
   4. **Matthew 7:21-23** – zeal without knowledge led to doing things for the Lord that He didn’t authorize.
   5. **NOTE: Opposite – Faith of rote – Revelation 2:4 (doing everything right by form, but without our hearts invested)**
5. Knowledge Without Practical Application (James 1:22-25)
   1. James describes a situation where ignorance is not the problem, but applying knowledge personally – **James 1:22-25**
      1. Hearing word = knowing what the word says.
      2. Doing word = understanding the word to have personal application.
      3. Forgetful hearing = hearing the facts but going away without putting such into the context of everyday life.
         1. ***“Forgets what kind of man he was”*** – failing to see self reflected in the information given.
   2. Sadducees guilty – **Matthew 22:31-32** – a scripture they all knew that gives necessary implication of a resurrection. (**cf. Acts 23:8** – there is a spirit, thus continued existence, and must be a resurrection to receive rewards and punishments)
   3. David – **2 Samuel 12:1-7** – Nathan speaks parable that directly applied to David.
      1. David understood the general sentiment.
      2. David failed to see himself – no practical application.
      3. YOU ARE THE MAN – practical application – I.E. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR ME?
   4. WE NEED TO KNOW THE “SO WHAT?” OF SCRIPTURE – this is not a merely intellectual, educational exercise.
   5. EXAMPLE – **1 Thessalonians 4:3-8** – God’s call to sanctification, and abstinence.
      1. So what? – **(vv. 4-5)** – control your body, not give to passions.
         1. Dress, entertainment, relationships, thoughts, etc.
         2. Parenting – raising kids to see the danger in such.
      2. So what? – **(vv. 7-8)** – you reject God by not behaving accordingly.
6. Incomplete Faith (James 2:8-13)
   1. James describes some who thought they were walking by faith, but weren’t completely – **James 2:8-13**
      1. **(vv. 8-9)** – case at hand – royal law, really fulfill?
         1. Not if you show partiality.
         2. Neighbor = everyone (Good Samaritan)
         3. **(vv. 1-4)** – showed love to rich man, but not poor.
         4. Not fulfilled the royal law.
      2. **(vv. 10-11)** – explanation of failure.
         1. God does not reveal anything that He does not require us to observe. (**cf. Deuteronomy 29:29** – that we may do)
         2. To leave anything out is to transgress.
      3. **(vv. 12-13)** – following exhortation.
         1. Act accordingly to this principle – judged by whole law, so keep completely.
         2. **(v. 13)** – specifically, show mercy to the poor, don’t treat with partiality.
      4. NOTE: Works with positive law **– James 4:17**
      5. James demonstrates further with discussion of faith and works – **James 2:20-24** – Abraham.
         1. **(v. 22)** – His faith was made ***“perfect”*** – *teleioō* – to complete (STRONG)
         2. ***“and faith was completed by his works” (ESV)***
         3. Walking by faith up to this point, AND WAS EVEN WILLING TO DO THIS FOR GOD – if not, incomplete faith (**cf. v. 10** – guilty of all).
   2. Some think they’re walking with Jesus because they do what they deem “most important,” but they neglect to do, or refrain from other things the gospel requires – **cf. Matthew 23:23-24** – should have done both.
   3. Rich young ruler – **Mark 10:17-22** – had kept the commandments faithfully but was unwilling to do that one thing – faith incomplete.
   4. **EXAMPLES – all assemblies, love to friend and foe, exhortation and discipline, all moral principles (cf. James 2:11), etc.**
7. Godliness Rendered Impotent (2 Timothy 3:1-5)
   1. Paul describes some who had a façade of godliness, but were the opposite – **2 Timothy 3:1-5**
      1. **(v. 5)** – speaking of people who appear to be godly in various respects (namely, false teachers, **v. 6**).
         1. ***“having the appearance of godliness” (ESV)***
      2. **(vv. 1-4)** – describe the same people.
         1. These are members of the church who are “pretending” faith.
         2. **(v. 5b)** – denied the power of godliness.
         3. In outward appearance they seem to be godly, but truly their inward man is unchanged, and belongs to the world.
      3. **(vv. 8-9)** – their true self will be exposed in the end.
   2. Friendship with the world – **James 4:4-5** – even simply fondness is unfaithfulness to God – cannot be pleasing to God while attempting to have one foot in the world, and one in the kingdom.
   3. God is not pleased with merely “talking the talk,” not even “walking the walk,” but wants a true inner change which will manifest in these ways.
      1. **Psalm 50:16-21** – describes those who use the language of the word, but whose lives are opposite.
         1. They may even “walk the walk” around those of faith but show their true self other places.
      2. **1 Timothy 5:24** – some sins may be undetected by others, but they will be revealed.
      3. **Hebrews 4:12-13** – God’s word will unveil the heart in the end.
   4. Following Christ is not about a mere appearance or even association, but a true inner change – **Romans 12:2** – transformed, renewing.
   5. Godliness denied power:
      1. Faithful assembly, but worldly outside assembly.
      2. Talk of godliness, but worldly minded, and in practice.
      3. Wear name Christian, but indistinguishable from the world.
8. We always have room to grow, and are ever seeking to measure up to the standard of Christ, but is there a greater distance between us and Jesus than we realize? Let us make sure there is not.

**Conclusion**

1. Peter, James, and John were only a stone’s throw away from Jesus in the garden. But in spiritual reality, they couldn’t have been further away.
2. We must avoid simply appearing to be close to Jesus, or convincing ourselves we are, when in reality we are lacking severely.