

## JESUS PRAYS IN THE GARDEN

*Mark 14:17–52; Hebrews 5:7–8*

PAGE 95 OF YOUR MARK STUDY BOOK

One day while I was shopping, I walked past the stationery section and noticed a journal with this quote on its cover: “I am fearless, and therefore powerful.” The journal did not cite the source, but the quote originates from Mary Shelley’s classic novel, *Frankenstein*. And although the cover was cute and feminine in design, these words were spoken by Frankenstein’s monster.

For some reason I stopped and stared at the journal for quite some time. It was the kind of inspiring statement that has become ubiquitous in our culture today. But like many of our most popular affirmations, it is not actually true. The truth is, no one’s power comes from being fearless, because no one is truly fearless. To be human is to experience fear at some time or another, which is why these words could only be spoken by a non-human monster!

No, the presence of fear does not make us less powerful. It is what we do when we are afraid or distressed that either empowers or undermines us. There is no more poignant example of this principle than Jesus Himself. In verse 34, Jesus confesses to being “deeply grieved to the point of death,” begging God to remove the cup of His suffering, for it to pass from Him (v.36). And in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus is described as being so anguished that He sweats drops of blood (Luke 22:44).

Jesus takes up His cross, but this strength does not come from the absence of grief; it comes from intimacy with the Father. Jesus chooses to spend His final hours on earth by praying to His Father, and it is this—not fearlessness—that prepares Him for death (Hebrews 5:7–8).

In a culture of self-help mantras that are, very often, dishonest, it is important that we hold them up to the reality of God’s Word and the humanity of Christ. Fearlessness sounds like a noble goal, but it is an impossible standard to achieve, and therefore, an empty source of personal power. In Christ, we find a better gospel: we are free to be real human beings, and we are reminded of where true power lies.

If I had the chance to rewrite that journal cover, I would probably replace it with a different set of borrowed words:

*“My grace is sufficient for you,  
for my power is perfected in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9).*

Our power does not come from ourselves, and this is good news. Whatever you are facing, take it to the only real source of power. Take it to God in prayer.

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