

Have you ever spent the night worrying about what would happen the next day, and not be able to relax and sleep¹? Fifty or so years ago, I suffered from this so much that I swore to myself that I would never get in front of a crowd to speak ever again! But here I am, for better or worse!

Think about Christ's anxiety of the night before His arrest. He spent that night praying, being "sorrowful, even unto death²". He had some angel help, and He tried to engage His friends in His struggle, but He endured the pain of it for long hours. There was no sleep for Jesus during this dark night³, and He had experienced a very long day prior to that.

But when the time came for the confrontation with those who wanted to eliminate him, He was ready to go! Hear His emphatic words:

Enough! Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!⁴

When I worry during the night, I often feel incapacitated, but as soon as I get up and can begin to work the problem, I feel so much better. And I see that in the action of Christ.

Christ kept His composure through His arrest, trial, and crucifixion. He was as silent as a lamb (I would be more like a screaming goat!). He was made ready to face the unwanted activities of the day, eager to complete His mission. At the end, he victoriously claimed "It is Finished!⁵" His love for mankind and His purpose in saving them overpowered His anxiety about what was going to happen, so that He was able to face the day.

Like David⁶, Christ ran to the battle line⁷. David knew there would be a victory, as Christ did (although not the same kind). David beat Goliath in battle; Christ apparently "lost" the battle with Satan and died, but ultimately won the victory through His resurrection and the power of His love for us. We celebrate this great victory in this communion⁸.

The Bread: First, we must consider the effects on the body, especially pain and sweat. Think of the effect on Jesus' body during the night and day of His preparation and trial.

The Blood: Second, think about the blood. He sweated like blood during His prayers, He bled over a long period of time throughout the day after His scourging; but the pouring out came after death when they pierced his side with a spear.

1. This is a syndrome now given the name "anticipatory anxiety".
2. Matthew 26:38, KJV
4. Matthew 26:46, NIV
3. A night without sleep was typical for a shepherd, and Jacob described in Genesis 31:40.
5. John 19:30
6. Jesus is the Davidic king, after all.
7. 1 Sam 17:48
8. "Just as the destruction of the temple seemed like the darkest moment for God's people, so did the death of God's Son. ... The darkness of the crucifixion, though, would soon

give way to the light of the resurrection. What seemed like defeat would ultimately be victory.” Landon Dowden

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