



WORKTALK WEEKLY

08 MARCH 2011

Welcome to WORKTALKweekly

Preparing For The Big One

All over the world, every single day of the week, athletes of all ages train for races. In this case, achievement is all about speed. The faster an athlete can run over a certain distance, the more he or she becomes separated out from the majority and joins an ever-decreasing number of increasing elite runners. Nevertheless, elite runners train every day and compete in various regular races in order to gain experience.

Every four years an event occurs for which very few qualify to compete. Once qualified, Olympic athletes focus more and more on the races of their lives, for it is in those races that their life story will be written.

You may not be interested in athletics or the Olympics, but you will know the difference between a regular project, an important piece of work, a very important piece of work, and the most important piece of work you ever will do. You will prepare with greater intensity and with more energy than for the mundane or the regular.

Oil Press Garden is situated at the foot of Olive Mountain in Jerusalem. It was here that the 30 year old man entered his final preparation for his most important piece of work. It was in this garden of Gethsemane that Jesus of Nazareth prepared himself to die, or more accurately, lay down his life.

If you watch, you will gain insight into how to prepare for the big day, the big project, the big appointment, the big deal. All four gospels recall the events.

First, Jesus went to a familiar place. This olive grove was a private garden, lent to them by a wealthy individual or family. Pause and reflect as to where your olive grove might be. You may be the wealthy individual who lends to others. Consider also that you may have an inner space, which you visit to draw strength when you need.

Second, Jesus took his friends with him. Everyone lives by the grace of others and Jesus was humble and vulnerable enough to ask for support. Perhaps you know who your support people are. If you struggle to identify them, maybe it would be worth considering connecting with some key individuals, who you know you can trust. A time will come when you will need them.

Third, however, a process began which changed the dynamic. Jesus took three friends only and moved away from the rest. He asked the remaining eight to pray and then asked the three to watch. Here is a wise strategy. He wanted some to focus on praying, seeking God, and communion with Heaven. He also needed some to watch his back, stay alert and stand guard. Remember, a lynch mob was being assembled. So when you face a task, gather a prayer team - not just for church work, but for any work. Perhaps form an email group or telephone conference and invite others to pray. Consider enlisting still others to watch your back, cover your vulnerabilities and stand with you.

But this is not the whole story - the record uses these words 'Going a little farther...' This is what will single you out. When faced with some tasks, you have to go a little farther. No one can come with you, and no one can do it for you. Like an Olympic athlete on the eve of the race, you know it is your race, your life, your moment, and it will require your sacrifice to reach your finish. Three times Jesus checked on his support and three times they had fallen asleep on the job - only confirming that he had to do his job and do it alone.

Shrove is not a common English word. In many parts of the English speaking world, it is used to describe the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday - the first day of Lent (the forty day period before Easter). Traditionally, this time, or

Shrovetide, was used to clear out sugar, fat and eggs from homes in order to fast for Lent. Hence some countries celebrate Pancake Day on this day, cooking pancakes to use the ingredients. In other parts of the world, this day is called Mardi Gras (French for fat Tuesday) or Carnival (Italian for taking meat away).

In all these words, there is the sound of preparation. This email is first being broadcast on Shrove Tuesday 2011 and it invites you to prepare to walk a journey to the cross. It also offers you some thoughts on facing the bigger challenges of life.

The story of Olive Press Garden ends with Jesus praying so intensely that his sweat was like drops of blood.

The most important race of your life will not be run without the '*sweating of blood*'. Jesus' prayer for himself and for them was that they would not fall into temptation. Perhaps because there would always be the temptation to be lazy, to be the coward, the settler for second best. Maybe it was the temptation to give up physically and let exhaustion and stress win the night. But such will not win gold. Even Jesus faced the temptation to give up, which was very real, hence his own prayer to his heavenly father. As he prayed and sweated, an angel appeared to strengthen him.

You may not be an Olympian, you are not the saviour of the world, but you have work to do, blood to sweat and a cup to drink. Perhaps you also have an appointment with an angel. Gold is forged in such times as these.

In preparation for the next WORKTALKweekly, do feel free to email us your thoughts to wtw@worktalk.gs or leave a comment on our [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) profile. You can also visit our [YouTube](#) channel - get inspired and share Worktalk's vision with others.

Work well
Geoff Shattock

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BIBLE SECTION

Mark 14: 32-41

32 They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." 33 He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. 34 "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch."

35 Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. 36 "Abba,[f] Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

37 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep? Couldn't you keep watch for one hour? 38 Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

39 Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. 40 When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him.

41 Returning the third time, he said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. 42 Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

Luke 22: 39-46

39 Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. 40 On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." 41 He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, 42 "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." 43 An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. 44 And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

45 When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. 46 "Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation."

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