



In the garden

In the shadows of Gethsemane's trees we find a place of broken promises. In the end they all had left Jesus and fled. These people are the same who just hours before had been fighting amongst themselves over which one would be sitting at Jesus' right hand. They had declared undying loyalty. Peter even went so far as to say "even though all may fall away, yet I will not." They'd left the lighted upper room where they'd shared the last supper, and entered the darkness of the garden. An olive orchard away from the busyness of the city of Jerusalem. Their faithfulness fails. Their commitment fades away. Their best intentions are lost in these moments of tiredness and fear.

Jesus told 8 disciples to stay at the edge of the garden. 3 he took further on to share with him. He urged the three to keep watch, to stay awake, to stay alert, to stay near him. It would have been so good, not to be alone. It would have been so good, not to be so exposed, so abandoned.

Jesus' agony is deep – to the point of death.
He's got to let go.
He's got to accept.
He's got to suffer right through to the end.
But they don't understand.

Pray with me – but they are caught in their own thoughts and fears.
Remain with me – but they distance themselves by falling asleep.
Stay awake for me – but they miss the point right from the beginning.

The garden of the broken promises becomes the garden of the broken heart.
Jesus' disappointment goes deep.
Weighs heavily. Aches unbearably.
And this all doesn't happen once – which would be painful enough.
No, it happens three times.
That is too cruel to bear!?

No friends at your side – but God?!

Mark 14: 32-42

In this situation of utter loneliness would he have known that God was still with him? Could Jesus have known this when he threw himself to the ground and prayed to his father?

He must have.

He speaks with God. Negotiates. Pleads.

And the outcome is: not what I want, but what you want.

In spite of his enormous pain Jesus can still make a decision. "Whatever comes – it will be with God at his side.

When Jesus comes back to his disciples for the 3rd time, his words are almost ironic: Are you still sleeping and taking a rest?

And before any of them could answer, he adds: the son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Such a death is not a decision one can make for oneself.

Such a death is a decision the others make...

...having utterly abandoned the one they were friends with for so long.