

Series: **Gospel of Mark**

Today's Title: ***"The Garden Prayer and Betrayal"***

March 21, 2021 – *Mark 14:26-52* (Also: *Matthew 26:30-56; Luke 22:31-53; John 18:1-11*)

Objective: To help people know the tremendous price Jesus paid in going to the cross.

Our passage today is one of the greatest insights into the person of Jesus.

It's a passage that puzzles me - intrigues me - appeals to me - relates to me - and amazed me - and I'm sure many of you have the same responses and feelings.

- ***It's a passage that records one of the greatest moments in salvation history.***
- ***It's one of the most significant moments as God is unfolding His providential salvation plan.***

The Apostle Paul tells us in **Ephesian 1:4** that God's plan of salvation - His choosing us for salvation - occurred "before the foundation of the world". Our passage today records the moment - and the struggle in that moment - when the plan will either be a theoretical plan - or it will become a reality.

I love movies that make you think - make you follow a complex plot - where what's obvious is rarely what it seems to be - where the suspense keeps you *on the edge of your seat*.

Our passage today has that feel to it.

The salvation of the world hangs in the balance.

I can't help but wonder if the angels in heaven and the demons in Hell were on the edge of their seats - watching - to see what would happen.

Turn to Mark 14:26-52

Prayer

Let's jump right in...

In context...Jesus and His disciples have just celebrated Passover - and Jesus has announced this was the last Passover He will celebrate until His kingdom.

Jesus has completely transformed - changed the Passover meal from a celebration and focus on the nation's deliverance/liberation from their Egyptian bondage - to a memorial celebration that focuses on Him - the suffering He will endure in His body - and on His blood which will ratify and seal the New Covenant (Ezekiel 36-37 & Jeremiah 31) as His blood is shed for the forgiveness of sins.

This was a massive shift away from God's command regarding Passover which was given 1,500 years prior during the leadership of Moses (Exodus 12, Numbers 9:2-3) - to *Communion / The Lord's Supper / Eucharist* - which we, the Church, have been celebrating for the past 2,000 years.

Rash boldness is not spiritual maturity. vs. 26-31

Luke tells us (22:24-30) that in the upper room the disciples had one final argument about who was the greatest - who would be the highest rank in the kingdom of Jesus.

This was a recurring argument that was never settled over their 3-years with Jesus.

Bragging - believing or saying that you're better than the others - that you're more loyal and spiritually committed than others - is not a good look for Christians - mainly because it's not a mark of spiritual maturity, but of spiritual immaturity - a mark of the flesh.

As Jesus demonstrated by washing their feet...the mark of spiritual maturity is serving others.

Let's see the boldness of the disciples...mainly...of Peter.

Read vs. 26-31

The prophet **Zechariah** (13:7) wrote that when the shepherd is stuck, “the sheep will be scattered.”

This is what Jesus is quoting.

This must have been a difficult thing for them to hear. During the meal Jesus told them one of them would betray Him - and they were shocked - filled with deep sorrow - couldn't believe it.

Now Jesus tells them that all of them will desert Him. Right after He tells them of their impending desertion, He again tells them of His resurrection - and that He will meet them in Galilee. (vs. 28)

Leave it to Peter to stand up and beat his chest - and what he says was not very nice toward the others.

“Even though they all fall away, I will not.”

Nice Peter...

In response, Jesus adds denial to Peter's desertion.

He tells Peter that he will deny Him that very night!

Peter beats his chest harder and tells Jesus He will go to prison for Him - he's willing to die for Him! (see other Gospel accounts)

Despite Peter's derogatory statement about the other disciples, they join Peter in his bold assertion - they would not desert Jesus - they are willing to die for Jesus!

I find that much of Jesus' teaching - much of the Bible's teaching - is difficult to accept.

I don't always like what it says about me - because it points out the things I don't like to admit.

My selfishness, pride - and many other sins.

It may be our first impulse to push back against Jesus - against the Bible's teaching - but we are on thin ice when we do.

1 Corinthians 10:12

“If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall.”

Pride blinds you to the truth - and prevents you from accepting the help you need from others - from the Holy Spirit.

Being bold for Christ is wonderful - and needed in our world today.

But boldness for the sake of boldness...

Boldness to make a point about your bravery or strength is not a good thing.

Instead of bold claims and big statements - let our life and love make a bold statement to the world!

The Savior's struggle with salvation's plan. vs. 32-36

What would have happened if Jesus didn't follow through with the plan for Him to go to the cross?

What would have happened if Jesus backed out?

No human soul would be in heaven and Hell would be overflowing!

We would have no hope - no future.

As Paul said:

"our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain...futile...we are still in our sins...we are of all people most to be pitied." (1 Cor. 15:14-19)

This truth is what makes Jesus' garden prayer so amazing to me!

Read vs. 32-36

Gethsemane = *olive press*

"cup" = O.T. symbol / metaphor of God's divine wrath.

John tells us (18:2) that they went here often.

This was a familiar place of prayer for Jesus, and it's to the garden He goes for His greatest battle.

The disciples don't understand the battle that's already waging. They don't understand the agony of this

moment for Jesus - even though He pleads for their presence and companionship, they can't do what He wants / needs. They are too tired - too unaware.

It's always been amazing to me that here is the 2nd person of the Triune God - who became God incarnate - Jesus.

The plan of salvation has been created and in motion since before the creation of the world - and here, in the garden - Jesus is asking the Father for another option!!!! In His garden struggle, we can see the dual-nature of Christ - 100% human & 100% divine.

Not a 50% - 50% mixture.

The enormity of His struggle has to do with both natures.

As God (deity), He has never known sin.

He is absolute in His holiness and righteousness.

He's been around sin in both His pre-incarnate and incarnate state - but He has never personally known sin.

The struggle and great fear confronting Jesus is He is about to take on the totality and enormity of the world's sin.

This will also result in a loss of fellowship with the Father - something never before experienced in eternity past.

In fact, it's quite possible that the prospect of becoming the sin-bearer for all of humanity is the greatest point of fear for Jesus - much more than the physical torture and horror He's about to go through, which is where we see His humanity struggling in the garden.

Physically - in His humanity, He knows what's coming. He knows the brutality and shame He will have to endure.

Pain is not something we move toward - it's something we avoid - we move away from pain.

But Jesus has to move toward it - embrace it - allow it to happen.

The physical pain is matched by the emotion and mental anguish the entire process will involve.

- Jesus will be publicly mocked, beaten, spit upon, falsely accused, jeered by the very sinners He's dying for.
- He will be brutalized with a crown of thorns and mockingly hailed as king.
- He will be whipped - scourged - to the point of his inner organs being exposed.
- He will be stripped naked and nailed to a cross - elevated for all to see.

vs. 34 - “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch.”

Jesus isn't being overly dramatic - He's at the breaking point. He can't bear the weight of this moment.

Luke 22:43-44

“And there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” (Matt. 4:11 - other occurrence of angel helping Jesus)

Hematidrosis - under tremendous stress the tiny blood vessels / capillaries - rupture near the surface of the skin and blood mixes with sweat.

Hebrews 5:7

“In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears...”

The loneliness of Jesus during His greatest need for companionship. vs. 37-42

We might think of Jesus as someone who didn't need other people - who was so powerful and in control that He could have done everything by Himself. But that's not the picture we see in the garden.

Read vs. 37-42

He was there with all of His disciples and He took His 3 closest friends - Peter, James and John with Him - to be near Him - and He really wanted them to pray with Him - to support Him. He didn't want to face this struggle alone.

But they didn't understand...they didn't know the enormity of this moment.

They kept falling asleep.

vs. 40 - "...they did not know what to answer Him."

Finally...Peter doesn't speak before thinking!

After praying some more - repeating the same prayer -

Jesus finds them sleeping a 3rd time - but time is up.

The moment has arrived, and the brutal part of God's salvation plan is now in motion.

It is enough; the hour has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

42 Rise, let us be going; see, My betrayer is at hand."

I wonder if this woke them up.

Betrayal of a willing Savior. vs. 43-49

Read vs. 43-49

Judas arranges a sign - a kiss - to identify Jesus to the "crowd".

The "crowd" is made up of the Jewish Temple guard - who carried "clubs" (*think Billy clubs*) and **John** (18:3) tells us there was also a contingent of Roman soldiers who would have swords.

It would have been dark - it's probably around 1:00 a.m. - and those who would apprehend Jesus might not have known what He looked like, so a kiss would be a clear identifier.

“kissed Him” = Gr. *kata-phileo* - a fervent kiss - over the top. This was not subtle or a normal greeting - because it wasn't a greeting - it was a sign for betrayal.

vs. 47 - “But one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear.”

Mark doesn't identify who this is...but it's not difficult to figure out!

Who else would do this...but Peter!

Matthew and **Luke** don't identify the disciple swordsman either...but **John** does.

Why does Peter do this?

This is a large “crowd” - with clubs and swords - there is no way they can fight their way out of this.

Probably 2 reasons Peter does this:

1) He has made a bold claim that he would die with Jesus.

2) He strikes the servant of the high priest.

Peter is the leader of the disciples...Jesus' right-hand man. Malchus (John 18:10) was the servant's name, and maybe Peter targets him because they had similar positions.

- Malchus was the servant of the high priest.

- Peter was the primary 'servant' of Jesus.

Luke tells us Jesus said, “No more of this!” And He touched his ear and healed him.” (22:51)

Only healing miracle of Jesus where He heals a fresh wound.

I wonder what Malchus thought of this after all the commotion.

I wonder if Jesus' healing touch and kindness to him made an impact?

Some believe John tells us his name because Malchus later became a Christ-follower and some reading His Gospel would have known him...but that is pure speculation and unlikely since John wrote his Gospel around 85 A.D. - some 50 years after these events.

vs. 48 - Jesus doesn't run - He doesn't try to escape. He's still in complete control of the events and the timing of the events.

He's going to the cross - willingly - in full obedience and submission to the Father's will.

He points out their hypocrisy in arresting Him with a small army - in the middle of the night - when He was with them every day in the Temple.

"But let the Scriptures be fulfilled." - possibly a reference to some of the prophecies in **Isaiah 53**.

This would be a prophecy which was fulfilled not by a direct act of Jesus, but by a direct act of His enemies.

The disciples abandon Jesus. vs. 50-52

As Jesus said earlier, His disciples all fled - the sheep scattered!

Read vs. 50-52

Who is the young man who runs away naked?

We have no clue.

I have never seen vs. 52 reenacted in a church drama about the crucifixion of Jesus!

One commentary had 10 possible identities.

We simply don't know who it was.

Mark likely included this to emphasize that everyone left Jesus - leaving Him alone with His betrayer and His enemies.

Apply it...

Give thanks...worship Jesus

The price He paid in going to the cross cannot be overstated.

Worship Him for what He has done on our behalf.

Be honest and open in your prayers.

Jesus gives us an amazing example of being brutally honest - and revealing His heart in the garden prayers.

Submit to God's will...always.

Even when God's will is counter to your will,
submit...obey.

Jesus models perfect obedience - total submission to
God's plan. "Yet not what I will, but what You will."

Close in prayer