



## The Gospel of Mark | Mark 14:26-52 June 21, 2020

Well, good morning, and if you have a Bible handy here with you or at home in your living room, I want to invite you to turn with me to Mark chapter 14. Mark, chapter 14. And we're going to pick up in verse number 26 this morning and again, I just want to say Happy Father's Day to all of our dads. This is the best time of the week for me to be able to open the Scripture and to teach the people of our church. I was actually exchanging a couple of text messages with my dad before I came here this morning and I was telling him, I'm wearing my grandfather's boots this morning and you can't see those probably online at home, but my grandfather was a rancher. And I was saying to my dad this morning, you know, pastors are a lot like ranchers in the sense that you know, the Bible talks about pastors as shepherds, right? And they tend to the flock, they feed the flock, they protect the flock. But I'm not Middle Eastern. I'm Texan. And in Texas, we don't have flocks. We have herds, we have ranches. And so, this is what you do, is you open your Bible and you feed the flock. You feed, I hate to call you a herd, but that's what Texas people think of, right? And so, this is the best part. This is where I get to do what I love the most, which is tending to those whom God has given me the privilege of being their pastor.

And so, if you have found Mark chapter 14, I want to invite you now to listen along as I begin in verse number 26: And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. And Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away, for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee." Peter said to him, "Even though they all fall away, I will not." And Jesus said to him, "Truly, I tell you, this very night before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times." But Peter said emphatically, "If I must die with you, I will not deny you." And they all said the same. And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. And he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch." And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer him. And he came the third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough; the hour has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand."

And immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man. Seize him and lead him away under guard." And when he came, he went up to him at once and said, "Rabbi!" And he kissed him. And they laid hands on him and seized him. But one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. And Jesus said to them, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But let the Scriptures be fulfilled." And they all left him and fled. And a young man followed him, with nothing but a linen cloth about his body. And they seized him, but he left the linen cloth and ran away naked.

This is God's word. Let's pray together. Father, I ask this morning that you would allow us to see remarkable truths about your deep love and affection for us in the gospel. We pray all of this in Jesus name. Amen.

Today we're looking at one of the most beautiful and yet at the same time, the most horrific passages in all of Scripture. In fact, in all of literature, I would say. This is a text that tells us of the betrayal and the arrest of Jesus. And before we get to that moment that Jesus has been predicting all the way since Mark chapter 9 that would take place, we see Jesus in a very intimate moment of prayer with his Father. And we see there the heart of Jesus and the heart of God in the midst of this. And so, it's here in the garden of Gethsemane that we understand the true depths of Jesus' suffering as well as his love for us. And so, beginning in verse 26 we read where we picked up, this is right where we left off last week. We saw the Last Supper last week and they left at the end of the Last Supper in verse 26 and they sang a hymn together. And I told you that was one of the Hallel Psalms from Psalm 113-18. And then it says they went out to the Mount of Olives. Now, in verse 27 it says that Jesus says to them, You will all fall away, for it is written, I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered. Now, once again, Jesus says something here that shocks them. Now, remember last week we saw Jesus make this shocking statement to the twelve when he said, one of you is going to betray me. You're going to hand me over to death. And they were stunned by that. They couldn't believe that one of them would actually do that. Now he says that not only is it going to be one of them who will betray him, but in fact all of them, the rest of the eleven disciples, they're all going to fall away from him. Now the word that's used here for 'fall away' doesn't necessarily mean that there's going to be this willful act on their part to do something like Judas does, but rather the intense pressure of the moment and the circumstances that they're in, is going to cause them to stumble. That's what it means to 'fall away,' to stumble. So, this is the difference in if I hand you a very valuable crystal ornament and say, hold on to this and don't drop it, it's very special to me. And if you take it and throw it on the ground and break it, well, that's what Judas does. If you are walking along and you stumble and trip because you're in an area where the carpet is sticking up and you didn't see it, and you fall and you unintentionally drop it, that's what happens here. Jesus is saying the circumstances are going to be such that you're not going to be able to withstand the pressure, and it's going to trip you up and you're going to fall, and you're going to fall away from me. He tells them again something is written, 'for it is written,' and he quotes from Zechariah 13:7, which refers to the martyrdom of Israel's good shepherd. But notice the language here, it says, 'I will strike the shepherd,' now that is spoken by God, which means that

it's God that is going to strike the shepherd. God will strike Jesus. In other words, the death of Jesus is the will of God. This is God's doing. It's his means of judging and punishing sin. We see this in Isaiah 53:10 when it says, yet it was the Lord's will to crush him. Him is the suffering servant, the Messiah, Jesus. It was the Lord's will to crush him, and to cause him to suffer. Jesus says that, in Zechariah you read, you will fall away from me, it is I who will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered, says God. What is going to happen to Jesus then, according to Zechariah is not only will he be struck by God the Father, but his disciples will scatter like mice; when you turn on the lights and mice run and they scatter in fear.

So now we come to this text and we see that Jesus says after that happens, I am going to be raised up and I'm going to go before you to Galilee. Jesus assures his disciples that even though he's going to die, that's not going to be the end of his story. And even though they're going to fall away from him, they're going to scatter like scared mice, that's not going to be the end of their story. He is going to restore them, and when he restores them, they're going to be reunited with him in a glorious reunion of sorts. Now, this should be comforting to every one of us who have ever felt as if we have unintentionally stumbled and fallen away from the Lord because this tells us that Jesus will not cast us off because of our mistakes. And that is good news for people like you and me. It also should be something that provides us not just with comfort, but I think, with a mandate, which is to say, if Jesus doesn't cast us away because of our mistakes, then as disciples of Jesus who are meant to be learning from Jesus how to be like Jesus, then neither do we get the option to cast people off from us because of their mistakes. We must do unto them as Christ has done unto us. And so, we then come to what happens in verse number 29 in the response to Jesus' statement, where Peter says to him, hey, listen, even though they all fall away, I will not. Notice how Peter is speaking for himself here, he sees himself as one who's more dedicated, he says, I'm not like the rest of them, even though *they* may all fall away, *I'm* not gonna fall away. And Jesus says to him, truly, I tell you, this appears 13 times in Mark, where Jesus makes this solemn pronouncement. It's how we would, this is actually the word 'amen.' It means truly, this is true. And Jesus says, let me tell you something that's true. You want to say amen to something? Say amen to this: this very night, in fact, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times. Notice how emphatic Jesus is. Peter, this very night, this one right here, before the rooster crows twice, this time, you Peter, you. Forget they, you, you will deny me. In fact, Peter, three times you're going to deny me. Jesus is so emphatic. And Mark turns around and tells us that Peter becomes agitated, and it says in verse 31, but he said emphatically, he's even more empathic, you can see how agitated he is. Jesus, if I must die with you, I will not deny you. It's not going to happen. And then watch this. And they all said the same. The other disciples join in. Yeah, me too. Yeah, we're not falling away. Two seconds ago, they were against Peter. What do you mean, they? They may fall away. Now they're with Peter. Yeah, we're with him. We're not falling away. Well, we're going to see how this turns out, alright? And as we've read the text, we already know, this isn't going to turn out very well for them. They kind of put their foot in their mouth. This is the same thing as when our kids say to us, 'never, I'm never going to do it again! I promise.' And you say that's a ridiculous promise. You're nine. You're going to do it again. I can promise you, alright? Every nine-year-old, whoever tells you they're never going to do it again, is going to do it again more than nine times, alright?

Look at what happens here. In verses 32 to 42 we come now to these very intimate, gut wrenching verses. Verse 32 says they went to a place called Gethsemane. Now the word Gethsemane literally just means olive press. This was a place where John tells us it was a garden and Jesus would go there often to pray. That's how Judas knew he would be there. It's probably very fitting that he's in a place that means to be pressed because Jesus is going to be pressed here. And he says to his disciples, I want you to sit here while I pray. Now, this is the third and final time that Jesus is going to pray alone in the Gospel of Mark and each of the three times it happens before something very monumental in the life of Jesus. And so, he tells them to sit there, and then he takes with him Peter, James, and John. This is the inner circle, and he began to be greatly distressed. Now this is a passive verb here, and it means that, it indicates that he's being moved with intense sort of suffering in an emotional state. He's overwhelmed with emotions in this place, and he's troubled. He's anxious. He senses the dread of what's about to come, this isn't about surprise or shock. Where something stuns and you say oh my gosh, I didn't know that was going to happen. That terrified me. But rather it's like something he sees ahead of him. It's like when your wife tells you, I scheduled a dentist appointment for you next week and you just say, ah, why?! And you just think about it for a week, right? This is this sense of impending doom, and it says in verse 34, he says to them, my soul is very sorrowful, even to death. The New Living Translation, which is more of a paraphrase of sorts, captures it greatly when it says, my soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Nothing in the Bible compares to what we're witnessing here in this moment. Remain here and watch, Jesus says to his closest three friends in the world. I just want you to sit here and be spiritually alert. I just need you to pray for me right now. Oh, how we need our friends to pray for us in our darkest hours, don't we? Going a little farther he fell on the ground. It's probably both under the weight of this intense burden that he's carrying as well as in an act of absolute reverence and desperation before his Father. And he prays that if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. You know, throughout Jesus's entire life, up until this point, he has shown such remarkable physical and moral courage the entire time. He has continued to predict his death, and he's continued with a sense of resolution that very few of us could understand this sense of resolve to say, I am going to the cross, and the disciples keep saying no, Jesus, this is not a good idea. Let's not go to Jerusalem. And he keeps saying, I'm going to Jerusalem and I'm going to the cross. They say, maybe we could do this instead and he says no! And we even saw in Mark that Jesus begins to walk in front of his disciples as if they're having to keep up with him because he's so resolved to go to the cross. So how is it that this Jesus, who's shown such remarkable moral and physical courage and such resolve to go face his death, how is it that now, in this moment, it seems as if he suddenly begins to cower and become afraid and terrified in a way that almost makes us stop and say, well, what happened to Jesus? This is uncharacteristic of him. He doesn't cower like this. Why is Jesus falling apart? And it's especially concerning when we realize that far lesser men have held up better than this seems to be, the picture we're given of Jesus. In fact, Socrates, when faced with his own death, reached out and grabbed the cup of hemlock, drained it, set it down, and he didn't turn pale. He stood there with resolve, and he said to his followers, stop your crying. He was so courageous in his death. And yet Socrates surely is not greater than Jesus, right? How is it that we look at the life of martyrs in the church, Ignatius, whose followers, one of the early church fathers, Ignatius, his followers, said repeatedly, let us get you out of this situation! He said, don't deny me the honor of dying for Jesus as a martyr because of my faithfulness to him.

Polycarp was burned alive at the stake, and when they burned him alive, continually they tried to get him to recant so that they didn't have to kill him. Polycarp said, Jesus has always been faithful to me. How would you expect me to deny him now? And he stood there without making a sound as they burned him alive at the stake. And every martyr that has fallen for Christ throughout human history has done so in some sense, recognizing that Jesus said in Matthew 5:12 hey, listen, when you suffer persecution on account of my namesake, rejoice and be glad so do the prophets before you. And they all did this in the early church. And the Book of Acts is just completely filled with stories of men who were faithful to their death, like Stephen and Paul and Peter and James. Can we really think that those men, in their moment of desperation, gained moral and physical courage to face their deaths by being obedient to die for someone who, faced with his own moment of impending doom, cowered in fear with no courage whatsoever? Can we really think that that action by Jesus would inspire this courage that we see in all of these other faithful followers of Christ? Well, of course not. Of course not. They would have run and fled. They would have said, we're not going to stand for this. This man was a coward in his own death. So, the only thing that we can possibly come to understand then is that in this moment there is something far greater than physical danger that Jesus is afraid of. There has to be something here, and we look at this and say, there has to be something greater than the physical suffering that's about to come upon Jesus that would make him fear what he is fearing. The suffering that must be awaiting Jesus must be such, and we're not talking about the physical agony of the cross. Many thousands, hundreds of thousands of people, were crucified on crosses throughout the days of the Roman Empire, so it has to be more than the cross. In fact, there has to be something here that tells us that what Jesus is about to face is something that no other human in history would ever face.

And so, it's what he says in his prayer that gives us insight into what is coming for Jesus. Look at Verse 36, he says in his prayer 'Abba.' Now this is an Aramaic word that simply means Papa or Father, and I know that in our popularized theology or popularized sermons we hear all the time this sense in which this means daddy. And yet there's nothing really in Aramaic that gives any child-like connotations to this whatsoever. In fact, all it really is saying is that you just get to say this to someone only that you're intimate with. And I think sometimes we've taken this with these popularized sermons that talk about Abba means dad. And then we hear these very irreverent prayers and we say, dad, here I am, and it's none of that nonsense. Rather, the only time in Scripture we see Jesus use the word Abba is in conjunction with when he says, nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done. We don't pray dad in some frivolous fashion to Jesus. We stand before him with reverence. And we say, Jesus if you prayed Abba, and you've taught me to pray Abba, then let me say to your Abba who is my Abba, one who I am intimate with, whatever you ask of me, I will do. See, this is a prayer that is implicit with reverence. He says, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will. You see that phrase 'this cup.' In the Old Testament, throughout the scriptures, the cup in the Old Testament was a symbol of God's wrath. And we see this throughout the Old Testament. I'm going to read you some passages and you're not going to be able to turn quick enough. So, we're going to put him up for you to be able to see. But in Job 21:20 we read these words, Let their own eyes see their destruction, and let them drink of the wrath of the Almighty. Now, to drink something, it has to be in a cup, you have

to take it in. And so, notice two things: One, the wrath of God, it's coming in the form of a cup to be drunk from, and the way in which this wrath is going to be experienced is going to be taken into the person. When you drink something, you take it into you. And so, if you pick up a cup of NyQuil when you're sick with the flu and you take a drink of it you feel that warm burning sensation going down into you because you have taken it inside of you. Now if you just throw NyQuil on your skin, maybe you feel a little bit of a warm sensation outside of yourself, but you don't feel it internally. This wrath is going to be taken in, in a sense. Psalm 75:7-8 says this, but it is God who executes judgment, putting down one and lifting up another. For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup. Here's this cup and this cup is filled with a foaming wine that is well mixed, and he pours out from it, from the cup, and all the wicked of the earth shall drain it. The cup and the wine. They're going to drain the cup down to the dregs, the dregs were the bottom of the cup. It was the sediments and the particles that floated in the bottom. You're going to get all of that stuff. You're going to drink every bit of it, no last bit left in the cup. Drink it until there's nothing left at all. Isaiah 51:17 says this, Wake yourself, wake yourself, stand up, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk from the hand of the Lord, look, the cup of his wrath, who have drunk to the dregs the bowl, the cup of staggering. Why is it a cup of staggering? Because to drink of God's wrath was to leave you disoriented and unable to continue on. Here is this statement about what the cup of God's wrath does to someone. It judges them. It disorients them. And when the cup of the Lord's wrath is drunk, it must be drunk all the way down to the dregs, meaning there's nothing left in the cup. So as if to say when you drink it, you need to be able to hold it upside down, and there's nothing left in it. When I was in the Marines in boot camp, they used to force us to hydrate ourselves, and we would have a canteen, and we all had to fill our canteen with water, and they would make you stand there in a big line, and you had to drink the canteen as fast as you could. 32 ounces of this canteen had to be drained completely, and when you were done with it, you then had to hold it upside down over your head so that there was no way you could get around having not drunk everything that was in the canteen. This is the image here. The cup must be empty. The cup must have been exhausted in the sense that there can be no wrath left to be poured out on the individual who is to embody, in a sense, God's wrath.

Now here's the thing. Jesus, praying in the garden, understands completely what the cup of God's wrath means. And for Jesus to say, let this cup pass from me, means that he understands that this is the cup that's given to the wicked to judge the wicked, and now he's being asked by the Father to pick up the cup and drink the cup himself. And so, if Jesus had no sin of his own, no sin that he should be judged on, then why in the world is he being asked to drink this cup? Isaiah 53, back to that suffering servant, tells us very clearly, verse four, Surely he, that would be the suffering servant, the Messiah, Jesus, borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. You see Jesus in the garden. What do we see about Jesus? He's crippled and crumbling under the weight of grief and sorrow. And yet we said stronger men stood up in the face of grief and sorrow. Why is this man crippling under the weight of the grief and the sorrow? Because the grief and sorrow that Jesus is experiencing is the grief and sorrow that everyone who faces the cup of God's wrath feels and experiences. And yet Jesus is not facing the cup of his own judgment. He's facing the cup of the judgment of the world, which means that no one ever in human history has ever experienced such grief and sorrow because no one in the history of the world has ever had to drink into themselves the wrath of

God's judgment against the sin of every single one of the people whom he would save. Jesus is experiencing the grief of countless untold billions of people's sins in this moment, the grief and sorrow of knowing that he alone is going to be judged and embody God's wrath for the judgment of billions of people's sins, in this moment. This is why he crumbles and falls. This is not Socrates picking up a cup of hemlock. This is not Peter faced with standing faithfully and righteously for Christ and being crucified upside down. This is Jesus, taking into himself the judgment of God for all the sins of billions of people whom he would save right here in this moment, yes, certainly he's going to fall to the ground in grief and sorrow and say to his Father, if there's any way, please let this cup pass. Isaiah 53:4 says this, yet we esteemed him stricken, that means punished. Smitten, that means struck by God. Jesus was punished and struck by God. He was afflicted, but he was pierced, look, for our transgressions, not his, ours. He was crushed, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace. With his wounds, we are healed. Now, all of us, like sheep, have gone astray. We have turned everyone, no one is excluded, everyone to his own way. We all did our own thing. God created us and said I've created you for one purpose alone. The very purpose that I've created you for is this: that you would give glory to me, that your whole life would be lived for me. Listen very carefully. It's very common for us to talk about sins in our life as if we've made a few mistakes here or there, you know, I know I've I made some mistakes. I know I haven't done the best I could have done. I've done some sins. But the Bible is very clear. This isn't about some sins. This is about sin, meaning that your whole life was created for one purpose, to glorify God by obeying him, by honoring him, by listening to him, by living your life in such a way that people would look at you and say, when I look at that person right there, I want to glorify God. I look at him and I think of God as bigger and grander and more magnificent than I did before because I saw this person's life. That's what a life lived for the glory of God is. That's how Jesus lived his life. He lived his life for the glory of God and that life is a life with no sin, which doesn't result in sins. And yet here, all of us are guilty of sin, of living our life for ourself. And the Lord takes all of our sin, and he lays it upon Jesus. Why? Because the Father so loved the world that he promised that he, having given his only son, would save every one of us who believes in him. And Jesus, out of this great covenant that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit have made together to redeem a people, to love and worship them forever, say let's save them. And Jesus says Father, I will take their sins upon myself, and I know that they must be held accountable for their sins. They must be judged. They must face judgment and wrath for their sin. But I will take their sin into myself, and I will drink the cup of your judgment, the cup of your wrath, and embody your wrath for them because of my love for them. And the Holy Spirit says, and yes, and then after you've died for them, I will regenerate them and seal them so that they will never fall away. But they will be ours forever, kept safe, and for eternity they will worship the triune God. This is the promise that God has made in his covenant to redeem the world. When Jesus is in the garden, he looks into the cup of God's wrath towards sin, and he recoils in agony and in horror. He falls to the ground in despair, crushed by grief and sorrow. And he looks again and he says, Father, is there any other way? No. Sin must be judged. The world must know that righteousness will prevail. Rebellion against me will not stand. Ungodliness will not stand. Righteousness must prevail.

And Jesus takes a long look into the cup, and with horror and agony, he realizes what he must take into himself, and then he stands up and picks up the cup and drinks it

and slams it down, and he says it is done. You understand? Jesus picks up the cup and he drinks it to the dregs for you. When he looks into the cup, he sees your sin. When he looks into the cup, he sees God's wrath against your sin. When he picks up the cup and he drinks it, he drinks it for you. When he drinks the cup and he slams it down, nothing left to come out of it like the canteen held over my head with nothing left to fall out of it. Jesus says there's not a single bit of God's judgment left for you. Do you understand the implications of this news for your life? God's judgment against your sin has been exhausted. There's none left for those of us who are in Christ, none, it's done. This is why I said, this is the most intimate and beautiful and gut-wrenching passage in all of Scripture. Jesus is praying and he says remove the cup, please Father, if there's any way, yet not what I will. But you will. This is the only way? OK, hand me the cup. Hand me the cup. He drank the cup so you wouldn't have to drink the cup.

Verse 37 says, he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour?" You know, Simon, you said you would be faithful to me and to death, remember that? You didn't even make it an hour. Watch and pray that you, now he's speaking, this is you in plural, this is where if the Bible would just be translated into Texas, we'd get it right. Y'all. He'd say y'all. Watch and pray y'all that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit, your desire, is willing. But the flesh, your body, is weak. You're tired. And again, he went away and prayed saying the same words. He goes and he has the same prayers. Verse 36, and again he came, look at verse 39, again he went, again he came. Again he went, again he came. And he found them sleeping for their eyes were very heavy. Remember, it's late, they'd had a big meal. They didn't know how to answer him, they're just ashamed and embarrassed they didn't make any excuses. And he came a third time and he said to them, are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough. The NIV simply says enough. Enough of this. What's the point? This is a waste of time to ask you to do this. You're not going to pray. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners, the hour has come. Rise and let us be going. See my betrayer is at hand. With this statement the first domino in Jesus' prediction of his death falls. Remember in Mark 9:31 the first time Jesus predicted all of this? What did he say? He said the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. The word delivered and the word betrayed are interchangeable, it's the same Greek word. The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. What does he say right here? He says, the hour has come. The Son of Man has delivered into the hands of men. The first domino has fallen. Everything is going to now tumble quickly after this, it unfolds very quickly. The scene is quick in the sense that he gets delivered over and yet at the same time, he seems to be in command of everything. He's in complete charge. It's amazing to see someone who's being arrested, who's in charge of everything happening to them as he's being arrested. He's proven himself faithfully fulfilling Scripture. The disciples proven themselves unfaithful.

Verse 43, immediately while he was sleeping, Judas came, one of the twelve. With him was a crowd with swords and clubs. I think we think of this as like an unruly mob, but this is not such, according to John this is actually a detachment of Roman soldiers that are coming. They have a commander and everything, from the chief priests and the scribes, and the elders are sent these people. That's the Sanhedrin that's been against Jesus, and the betrayer had given them a sign. He said the one I kiss is the man. Seize him and lead him away under guard. And when he came up, he went to him at once.



He said Rabbi and he kissed him. This world kiss is an exaggerated kiss. He comes up and he goes MWUAH! Everybody sees it and knows this kiss of death seals Jesus' fate, and they laid hands on him and seized him. One of those who stood by drew his sword, and he struck the servant of the high priest and he cut off his ear. Now John tells us that the one who cut this man's ear off is actually Peter, and John also tells us that the name of this man whose ear was cut off was a man named Malchus. Luke tells us Jesus then turned around and healed the man's ear. Mark leaves all of that unsaid, Jesus says to him, have you come out as against a robber? Now here's the thing. That word robber in context really is not the best way to translate. It should really be translated as insurrectionist, alright? Or a revolutionary might be a good way to think of this. This is a phrase used oftentimes in Greek, that is referencing somebody who is leading a revolution. In fact, the NIV actually translates this to say, am I leading a revolution? And I think sometimes we've had this image of this Jesus being treated as a robber and he's dying with robbers, and we think, you know, man, they were tough back then. They just crucified people who stole some stuff. But this is more like Robin Hood. He's leading an insurrection and he's robbing people and looting along the way and they kill him. Verse 49, day after day, you know, I was with you in the temple. I was teaching you. You didn't seize me then, you didn't treat me as some insurrectionist revolutionary. But now you come out in this secret place and you do it? Well, that's alright. Let this Scripture be fulfilled. Once again, you see Jesus, it doesn't specify Scripture, it's just saying in general, everything that is happening is happening according to God's plan. And they all left him and fled. And a young man followed him with nothing but a linen cloth about his body, and they seized him, but he left the linen cloth and he ran away naked. This man's identity remains a mystery to us. Now church tradition throughout the centuries has told us that this is actually referring to Mark himself, who writes this. Now there's a lot of internal biblical things that might make us question if that's really who it actually is or not, but it really doesn't seem to matter. In fact, it's more as if Mark in just leaving this there in this sort of enigmatic fashion is more or less just saying, hey, you know, this is a good place for you maybe to just stop and examine your own willingness to abandon Jesus in the moment. By not putting a name on this man, by giving no face to the man, maybe were meant to see our own face right here. Maybe we're meant to look at this scene and say, and a young man and see myself following him with nothing but a linen cloth being seized and running away naked, which is the ultimate image of shame in Scripture. Shame over what has just taken place.

I want to look at that verse 50 for just one second here. I am not sure if there's any verse in Scripture to me that is more heartbreaking than this verse. Just let me read this verse to you one more time: And they all left him and fled. They all left him. NIV says they and every one of them deserted him. Just left him, just like he said they would. He predicted this would happen. He predicted it. And so now it's happened, and he's left to face this crisis completely alone, he was the greatest friend any of them had ever had. Any of them would ever have. And they just left him all by himself, in his moment of greatest needs. You know, friends, I don't know about you, but there's been a lot of times in my life that I have felt just like Jesus, just deserted by others. And there's been times in my life where I have gone through really difficult circumstances and have felt like anybody on the outside watching, would just say man, and they all just abandon him in that moment. I think I'm not unique in that. I think that most all of us have felt that way and probably can really identify with Jesus right here, just

feeling as if there have been times in our life where we feel so alone and we feel as if we have to face the greatest threats to our life all by ourself. We just feel completely abandoned. And I think here we recognize that Jesus is able to identify with us in our loneliness, in our feeling of being deserted. But I also think that there's been many times in my life where I felt just like these disciples. It's not me who has been the one who's felt abandoned, but I feel like there's been a lot of times in my life where I have felt like the disciples in the sense that fear has made me want to flee and abandon Jesus when I should have stood immovable for Jesus. Because, you know, the truth of the matter is that, like the disciples, me and you, we become afraid of things and especially when it seems that there's a mob with guns and clubs and sticks ready to demand of us that we declare whether we're with him or not. I think in the years ahead of us as our world becomes more and more of a post Christendom society, as the world becomes more secular and the world becomes not only indifferent to Christianity, but hostile to Christianity, I think they're going to be more and more moments where each of us find in our lives that we're left with the choice as to whether or not facing what seems like an angry mob demanding of us to declare whether we're with him or not, that we're going to feel frightened and we're going to want to flee. And I think it's in those moments that we're going to recognize how astonishing the Gospel is, and not just how astonishing the Gospel is, but how beautiful Jesus is. Because in the face of the greatest adversity that any person has ever faced, or would ever face, this man stood immovable. He stood immovable. And not only did he stand immovable, but he stood immovable on behalf of all those who fled him. That's what makes him so beautiful. That's what makes him so unlike anyone else. And he did it so that in order of our time of greatest need in our life, whether it's a moment in our life that we feel abandoned by others, or that we feel fear, as if we might need to flee and abandon those who we stood with who are standing with Jesus, that it's in those moments of our weakness, where we see that our tendency is that we might stumble and fall away from Jesus, that in that moment we're going to be able to recognize that the greatest friend we've ever had is one who promised us not only that he would never, ever leave us nor forsake us, but when the moment came that he had the choice between forsaking us and letting us drink the cup or picking up the cup and drinking the cup for us, he didn't move. He stayed right where he was.

Listen very carefully. Jesus looked into the cup of God's wrath. He saw it, as judgment poured out not on his life but on your life. On my life. That means he saw every horrible thing that I've ever done, every horrible thing you've ever done, every horrible thing that we would ever do. And he looked in that cup. He saw the judgment when he looked into it. He looked into it and he said, this is the judgment they deserve. And he looks in the cup and he sees all the horrible things and all the judgment. And he sees how easily you and I would desert him, how little it would take for us to fall away. And he looks in the swirling cup and then he picks it up and drains it to the bottom. Jesus, he didn't flee from you. He didn't run. He wasn't repelled by your ugliness. He was drawn to you out of his great love for you, even though you and I were ugly in our sin. And there he stands immovable in his willingness to take God's judgment for you. This is why Jesus is worthy of our worship and worthy of our praise.

Father, I want to ask this morning that you would give grace to each of us who are desperately in need of you. To love and care for us in the midst of our sin, our grief, our

sorrow. Father, we pray this morning that you would, out of faithfulness to what you have promised, which is to redeem broken and hurting and lost people, Lord, that you would extend grace this morning to hard hearts, to downcast and broken sinners. And I pray Lord, there would be no one this morning who would be listening to my voice who will have felt like their life is too far gone for you to redeem. That they would see their immovable friend Jesus, drinking into himself the judgment and the wrath of God against them, that they might escape his judgment and live forever with him in his kingdom. To the glorious praise of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit forever. And we pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.