

RTS Women's Study: The Gospel of Mark

#30: Mark 14:12-42: Faithful Jesus vs. Unfaithful Disciples

Intro: The Problem of Suffering

I. The Faithful Suffering of Jesus

A. The Depth of His Suffering (v.32-36)

- Jesus was "greatly distressed and troubled" (v.33)
 - Jesus admits he is so distraught that it is "even unto death"; meaning that his distress threatens to overwhelm him
 - Luke tells us that Jesus sweated drops of blood
 - *Note: Jesus is a real human being like us
- He is about to drink the "cup" of God's wrath on the cross (v.36)
 - The physical suffering of crucifixion was one of the worst ever invented
 - Beyond physical suffering Jesus bore God's wrath, equivalent to the pains of hell
 - The term "cup" refers to the cup of God's wrath (Is 51:22; Jer 25:5; Rev 14:10)
- Jesus fully submits to his upcoming suffering
 - He asks father "Abba" if there's another way
 - But he commits to obedience: "Not what I will, but what you will"
 - **Note: Jesus refuses to resist God's plan for him, even if it includes suffering

Key Point: Jesus's actions in Gethsemane are the greatest acts of obedience in human history; a dark night of the soul that would determine the fate of the world.

B. The Purpose of His Suffering (v.12-25)

- The Passover Feast
 - Mark tells us about this feast: "On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb" (v.12)
 - This Feast celebrated the deliverance of God's people from Egypt when the Israelites were asked to slaughter a Passover lamb and spread the blood on the doorposts
 - In other words, the original Passover was a picture of God's deliverance
- Jesus's Death would make him the ultimate Passover Lamb
 - Jesus instituted the "Lord's Supper" in order to remind us of his death and to explain why he died
 - Bread represent the broken body of Christ for us: "This is my body" (v.22)
 - Wine represents the blood of Christ shed for us: "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many" (v.24; Exodus 24:8)

**Key point: The Lord's Supper is a special way that God reminds us of how much he loves us and how much he suffered for us

II. The Unfaithful Self-Preservation of the Disciples

A. Stage 1: Sleeping (v.37-42)

- Jesus needed support, encouragement and prayer
- But the disciples fell asleep—three times!
- Here Jesus is about to die for the sins of the world and the disciples could not keep watch for one hour!

B. Stage 2: Fleeing (v.26-28)

- Jesus warns them that they will all “fall away”
- Zech 13:7 gives the reason: “Strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.”

C. Stage 3: Denying (v.29-31)

- Peter insists that he will be the exception to the rule: “Even though they all fall away, I will not.”
- But, Jesus predicts that Peter’s actions will even be worse! “You will deny me three times.” (v.30)

D. Stage 4: Betraying (v.17-22)

- Jesus interrupts the meal with an ominous prediction: “one of you will betray me” (v.18)
- None of the disciples knew who that would be! They all asked “Is it I?” (v.19)
- This is the worst of the sins: “better for that man if he had not been born!” (v.21)

**Key Take Aways:

- Encouragement: Even the greatest saints are fallen, sinful people who will often fail to serve God as we ought. That’s why we need grace!
- Warning: We all believe we are stronger and more faithful than we really are. It may just be that we’ve not yet been tested!

Discussion Groups

1. Like Jesus, someday you may be faced with a serious fork in the road where you have to decide whether or not to follow God. What can you do now to prepare for that moment?
2. How does Jesus’ deep suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane change the way you view the Lord’s Supper? How can this passage help you receive the Lord’s Supper differently at church?
3. In what ways are the failures of the disciples both an encouragement and a discouragement? How can we walk the balance between recognizing our own sin on the one hand, and also striving towards obedience and faithfulness on the other?