

The Betrayal & Arrest of Jesus

Mark 14:26-52

This passage is one of the most intense and revealing scenes in the Bible. It reveals Jesus' full humanity as he staggers in prayer. His weakness is so apparent that Celsus, a second century Greek philosopher who first wrote a comprehensive attack on Christianity, said it was evidence that Jesus wasn't God. But Jesus' weakness doesn't obscure his divinity; it reveals it. Seeing Jesus trust the Father and care for his waffling disciples as he goes to the cross is an astounding account of his steadfast love. Consider Christ's steadfastness in this final scene before he enters his passion.

Jesus' Knowledge of Sin

They head up to the Mount of Olives, and Jesus tells them they'll all fall away and quotes Zechariah 13:7: "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered" (v27). The whole Gospel of Mark builds to and foreshadows this point. Peter leads the disciples, even while exalting himself above them, saying he would never fall away (v29). Jesus specifically contradicts him, but still Peter insists, even to death, and they all follow (vv30-1). This is all very familiar! They had been of little faith in the storm (4:40), dense about the feeding of the 5000 and leaven of Herod (6:52; 8:15ff.), arguing about who was the greatest (9:33ff.), rebuking children, asking for the best thrones (10:35) and so on. Peter had rebuked him for talking about dying and rising (8:31ff.). The three who went up the Mount of Transfiguration go with Jesus into the garden, the three boldest, ready to be baptized, drink his cup, and follow him to death, but they can't watch an hour. They've learned *some* things, but not enough. Jesus' prophecy is fulfilled (v50), but he still loves them. His point was not to say, "By the way, you're worthless", but to comfort them once they sinned. Thus his wonderful promise to lead them afterwards (v28). He wasn't ignorant of their sin, nor is he of ours. His trust was not in man, so neither should ours be (Ps. 146:3). Receive this enormous comfort: God knows your sins better than you do and loves you anyway.

Jesus' Faithful Prayer

Jesus took the disciples to Gethsemane, and the three with him to watch and pray. This was his whole reason for going. He knew he was going to suffer, and instead of giving in to sin like we so often do, he turned to God the Father. Why do we not pray? Because we got this. Peter had it to, except he didn't. Jesus prayed three times and withstood sin. Peter failed to pray and denied Jesus three times. Even though the disciples weren't steadfast at this point, Jesus was and he called on them to pray. Do you? To pray is care about something, and to ask someone to pray for something is to care more about it and them. God is his Abba, Father, and Jesus just talks to him. He falls down in reverence and pours himself out. Jesus knows the answer to the question, but he turns to the Father for comfort. Luke tells us the Father sent an angel (22:43). Jesus stayed steadfast because he prayed. He prayed for the disciples and prays for you (Lk. 22:32; Heb. 7:25).

Jesus' Willingness to Suffer

Jesus doesn't face death like ignorant and indifferent Socrates. He is looking at the cup of God's wrath and staggering before it—"greatly distressed" or "astonished". If you love anything, you are outraged at its destruction. Even from afar we are angered by sexual slavery, greed, lies, injustice, oppression, and murder. God, who is infinitely love, is that much more offended than we are by sin. And He is not far away. The cup is God's wrath, which metaphorically fills with our sin. God is a patient judge, but eventually it fills up and He brings justice. Seeing that cup shocks Jesus. He is also "troubled" or horrified. If you have ever seen death, you know the nauseating feeling. His sorrow makes him feel like he is going to die (v34). We don't like to think of God's wrath, but it is real and resides upon people (Jn. 3:36). Jesus drinks that cup for all who trust in Him. He became sin, satisfied justice, and redeemed the world (2 Cor. 5:21). Even though we waffle and flee, He stayed the course, securing our salvation forever (vv51-2).

NOTES FOR LITTLE SAINTS

Today's Passage: Mark 14:27-41

27 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.' 28 But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee." 29 Peter said to him, "Even though they all fall away, I will not." 30 And Jesus said to him, "Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times." 31 But he said emphatically, "If I must die with you, I will not deny you." And they all said the same. 32 And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." 33 And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. 34 And he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch." 35 And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. 36 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." 37 And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? 38 Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." 39 And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. 40 And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer him. 41 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.

1. What did Peter tell Jesus he would never do? Did he do it?
2. Jesus was God and a complete, true human. He experienced every temptation that we face. How did he feel in this scene (verses 33-34)? What did he ask the Father to do (verse 36)?
3. The disciples failed to pray for Jesus and all scattered when he was arrested. But he was faithful and trusted the Father, which is why we can rely on him. What does he tell Peter to do (verse 38)?
4. Draw a picture of Jesus on his knees praying to Father in the garden of Gethsemane while Peter, James and John are conked out sleeping.

Memory Verse to Recite Next Week:

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." --Mark 14:36