

Mark Study
Week Twenty
Mark 14:6-34

Day One

6 "Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. 7 The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. 8 She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. 9 I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

v. 6 – I think this is a “word” for any man who is trying to prevent any woman from doing for God what is in her heart to do. The men weren’t focused on Jesus or what the woman had done for Him. Their focus really wasn’t even on the woman. Their focus was on their preferences – what they felt was appropriate and what made them feel good. They did not like a woman doing what she did, so they were uncomfortable.

God doesn’t do things to make you feel good and comfortable. God does things that please Him. You must adjust to God and His ways. He doesn’t have to adjust or adapt to yours. **Is there something you don’t like right now, something that may even upset you, that is just a matter of personal preference and not a matter of faith or doctrine?** If there is, deal with it and get over it!

v. 7 – The men who fussed at the women said that the perfume could have been sold and the money given to the poor. That sounded so noble, even righteous. The truth was, however, that they weren’t really interested in the poor. They just wanted to justify their prejudice against the woman and what she had done.

It is interesting that the men didn’t ask Jesus for His perspective on what the woman had done. **If there is something that is upsetting you, why don’t you ask God for His perspective and then live in what He shows you?**

v. 8 – Jesus’ perspective was that the woman had anointed Him for His burial. It is interesting that Jesus was raised from the dead *before* He was ever anointed. So this is an indication that His resurrection was a foregone conclusion, so much so that the Father had Jesus anointed *before* His death because there would not be time after!

I like what Jesus said. She did what she could. There was nothing else she could do, but it seems like it was good enough for God. **What can you do for God, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant?** This reminds me of the story we studied recently of the woman who gave two small coins. She did what she could and Jesus took notice and taught a lesson from what she did.

v.9 – Wow! Jesus not only endorsed what this woman had done, but he vowed that what she did would be told along with the gospel. Unfortunately for the men involved, their story would be told as well. **How would you like to be memorialized? As the woman or the men?** I choose the woman, but that means I will have to do what I can for God instead of opposing what others can do as the men did.

Day Two

10 Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. 11 They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over. 12 On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?" 13 So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him.

v. 10 – Jesus mentioned His burial and immediately Mark began to describe the events that led up to Jesus' death. First, we see that Judas, one of Jesus' handpicked apostles, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus. The leaders had no way to nab Jesus and, as we saw earlier, the crowds in Jerusalem for the feast would have made that difficult. With Judas's cooperation, however, they had a chance to seize Jesus without drawing the notice and wrath of the people.

There is much conjecture as to why Judas chose to betray Jesus. We will never know for sure. What is clear is that Judas' actions were in clear fulfillment of Scripture that described Jesus' ultimate death. So was Judas just a pawn in God's hands, without any say in the matter? Absolutely not! What Judas did, he did of his own free will and choice. Yet what he did fulfilled Scripture:

Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me (Psalm 41:9).

v. 11 – The chief priests, being the devious, conniving men that they were, were only too happy to receive Judas and promised to use some of the money from the Temple, perhaps even the two small coins that the widow had given earlier in Mark, to pay him for his dastardly deed. It is interesting what people will do for money. Judas chose to betray the sinless Son of God for some silver. Others sell their families, futures, even their eternal life for a few coins or dollars.

What will you do for money? What price are paying to get the money that you receive? Don't judge Judas too quickly until you judge your own heart and motives.

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs (1 Timothy 6:10).

v. 12 – There was no doubt in the disciples’ minds that Jesus would celebrate the Passover. After all, He was a Jew! When Jesus is referred to as the Lamb of God, it is because He was the ultimate Passover sacrifice. Once Jesus gave His life, there was no need for an annual Passover sacrifice ever again.

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29).

v.13 – This is a strange directive, because men did not carry water jars, unless they were of a sect called the Essenes. The Essenes bathed constantly to maintain their purity and they were celibates, so there were no women to carry the water for them. When the disciples saw a man carrying water, they would recognize as the one Jesus referred to, since it was such an unusual sight to behold.

Day Three

14 Say to the owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' 15 He will show you a large upper room, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there."16 The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover. 17 When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve.

v. 14 – This story is similar to when Jesus sent the disciples ahead to secure His donkey for the triumphal entry. Here He has them secure a room for the Last Supper. God does not lack resources. What you need to do His will, He can provide. He can use someone that you know or someone that you don't know. He can use someone who is near or far away. There is no lack in God!

Are you fretting right now because of lack of money or anything else that you need? Cheer up and have faith! God is able to provide for you in amazing ways. So stop limiting yourself by limiting God. Do you believe that God can provide for you just like He did in this instance? If so, then start acting like it!

v. 15 – Not only were the disciples going to find a place for the Passover meal, but it was also going to be fully furnished and ready to use. God does not provide in halfway measures. So the Lord provided the room, the furnishings and someone to lead them there. They lacked nothing. **Have you ever lacked anything that you needed? Has God ever failed you? If the answer is no to both questions, then why are you uptight today?** Trust God that He will continue to do for you what He has always done.

v. 16 – I wonder if Jesus sent the same disciples to do this that had gone to fetch the donkey? If so, I would imagine they were less anxious doing this than when they went to get the donkey. Why? Because they had experience in this sort of thing. You grow in faith, so that each time you must move in faith, it should be easier. Keep in mind, however, that faith is not an event, it's a lifestyle. I have found that most people have a

testimony of when they functioned in faith, but they then spend most of their time trying to avoid having to live by faith again.

Is that the case with you? Is faith an event or a lifestyle? How can you live a more consistent life of faith? What are trusting God for today that only He can provide or do?

v.17 – Did Jesus send some of the Twelve to secure the room, or did He send some other disciples? Mark wrote that He arrived with the Twelve and it sounds like they weren't part of the preparations team. If not, then those who did the work were not included in the meal itself. Sometimes you serve but you don't enjoy the fruit of your labors. That is reserved for someone else. That can be the difficult and sometimes thankless aspect of serving.

Yet Jesus' set an example of service, and He expects us to follow His lead. **How has your service been lately?** As I write, I am on an Alaskan cruise, serving Michael W. Smith. I carry bags, open doors, answer questions and stay in the background. It's a good chance to serve without being out front or even noticed. I do this once or twice a year and it really is good for me. **What can you do today to serve without any expectation of return?**

Day Four

18 While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me." 19 They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, "Surely not I?" 20 "It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one who dips bread into the bowl with me. 21 The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."

v. 18 – The disciples sat on the floor, eating from low-lying tables, resting their elbows on pillows. It was in intimate setting, a traditional meal among friends and close associates. That setting made Jesus' announcement all the more shocking. Jesus revealed Judas' intent. Once again He had to preface it with His oft-used, "I tell you the truth." It was inconceivable that someone would betray Jesus but, if it was to be anyone, Judas was the most likely culprit. The fact that the disciples were eating together and one was to betray another was even more shocking, for eating together was a mild form of covenant.

v. 19 – Every one of the disciples proclaimed their innocence, yet in reality every one of them was more than capable of this heinous deed. It is so important that we realistically assess our capabilities and, where sin is concerned, we all have great potential for just about anything. The Calvinist's hold that man is totally depraved, which means that man is not as evil as he can be but he is totally incapable of doing good on his own without God's intervention.

I have often said that you don't know what's in you until someone or something squeezes you to see what comes out, kind of like a toothpaste tube. Don't proclaim your innocence too strongly, but remember what Paul wrote:

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, for each one should carry his own load (Galatians 6:1-5).

Is there something you said you would never do or you were incapable of doing?
You may want to reconsider that assessment!

v. 20 – Jesus declared that the betrayer was one of the Twelve. Does this indicate that more than just Jesus and the Twelve were there? Were there other disciples there as well? Why would Jesus say “the Twelve” instead of “one of you” if only those Twelve had been present? This is of no particular importance, except that the famous painting of the Last Supper is rendered inaccurate!

It is interesting to me that the NIV translation always capitalizes the letter t in Twelve. This signifies that they were a formal group and not just a band of loosely-knit associates.

v. 21 – This verse indicates that Judas did indeed have freedom of choice in his decision to betray Jesus. He was to be held accountable and his sentence rendered made his birth and existence ill-advised.

Day Five

22 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body." 23 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. 24 "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them. 25 "I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God."

v. 22 – As I write, I have been a Christian for 34 years. I still don't understand as much about what Jesus did or instituted at the Last Supper. I was raised Catholic, so I know that they believe about the Eucharist and communion. I know what the evangelicals believe, or at least some of it.

I do know this:

1. We are to remember Jesus when we eat the bread and drink the cup.
2. We should also remember what He accomplished on our behalf.
3. We must do it regularly.

4. We should use the opportunity to examine ourselves, our relationship with the Lord and with others.

Can you add anything else to this list?

v. 23 – Jesus gave His body and blood for us. I have often said that anyone can give their body. Football players do in the successful execution of a play. Mothers do to nurse their children. Jesus, however, gave His body and blood. In other words, He gave it all. I suppose that is another item to be added to my list.

5. Jesus gave it all and expects us to follow His example and do the same.
6. Thanksgiving to God is the attitude with which we drink the cup and eat the bread.
7. Everyone is to drink the cup and eat the bread.

Are you thankful today for what Jesus did for you? Have you expressed that thanks?

v. 24 – What Jesus instituted was a new covenant, which replaced the old covenant. As the letter to the Hebrews tells us, this covenant is a better covenant than the old. Anyone who tries to cling to the old once the new has come is foolish, no matter how glamorous, spiritual or exotic seems to be. The Law is no substitute or viable alternative to the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

That doesn't mean I throw out the Law or commandments. I don't follow them to gain God's favor or grace. I follow them, where appropriate, out of love because of what Jesus has done for me.

v. 25 – The tendency is to attribute this verse to some eschatological meaning. I think that Jesus was saying here that things would be different the next time they saw Him eating or drinking. God's kingdom or government would be established and expressed in a new dimension. That was certainly true. After Jesus rose, all the things of God were enhanced, improved and renewed.

Do you fully appreciate what Jesus did for you and us? Do you celebrate the newness of life you have in Christ? What more can you do to express this joy, new life and better covenant?

Day Six

26 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. 27 "You will all fall away," Jesus told them, "for it is written: 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' 28 But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee." 29 Peter declared, "Even if all fall away, I will not." 30 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "today—yes, tonight—before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times."

v. 26 – I wonder what hymn they sang? What were the words? Jesus had worked for more than three years to build these men into His ministry team that would carry on the work after He was gone. They were far from perfect and some would have examined them and determined that they were not ready for the work ahead of them. They would not distinguish themselves in the following days after the Last Supper, that's for sure.

Yet they would go on to change history in the power of God and the commitment of their love for Jesus. With the benefit of time and perspective, they came to understand the lessons behind what Jesus had done and taught.

That is why you cannot “give up” on anyone, no matter where they seem to be today. In time and with God's help, they could become God's champion! For that matter, you cannot give up on yourself.

v. 27 – Jesus had predicted Judas' betrayal and now He told them that they would all fulfill Scripture by falling away from Him that very night. The verse he referred to is found in Zechariah 13:7. As with Judas, the disciples were not helpless pawns in the hands of God. They cooperated with this plan with freedom of choice, yet they fulfilled God's purpose as they did. Don't ask me to explain that, but I believe that it's true.

v. 28 – Jesus never doubted that He would rise from the dead. He predicted it and made plans of what He would do when He came back to life. That was faith! Jesus so trusted the Father that He was willing to die, trusting also that He would stay in that condition. When Jesus commands us to have faith and trust God, He isn't asking us to do anything He hasn't already done.

That is the beauty of the Christian walk. Jesus asks us to do what He did, but He has sent the Spirit to help us. We are not alone in our walk. The fact that Jesus has done what He did gives us hope and the Spirit's presence gives us help. God isn't a distant God; He was that is close by to help us. **Are you utilizing the help of God as you follow Jesus? Are you trusting Him as Jesus did?**

v. 29 – Peter declared his loyalty, in essence correcting Jesus and telling Him that He was wrong. God knows you better than you know you, so it is best not to resist His perspective. Someone once said that when God asks you a question, such as “Are you angry?”, He isn't looking for information. He already knows the answer! He is trying to help you see the reality of where you are. Jesus was trying to help the disciples see reality, but Peter was living in unreality.

Is there anything you have ever declared, “I will never do that.”? Be careful when you say that. You may want to soften it by saying, “I hope I never do that” or “By God's grace and with His help, I will never do that.”

v. 30 – Once again, Jesus had to assure the disciples that He was telling the truth. What else could He do? Yet the truth sounded so untrue that He had to give them assurances

that He had thought about what He said and that it was accurate. In this case, He predicted that Peter would distinguish himself as he fell away by denying the Lord three times. Jesus also gave the exact scenario of how that would happen – the rooster would crow twice and Peter would complete his third denial/betrayal. That's very specific. You can see how later in life the disciples would come to appreciate the fact that Jesus was indeed God, for He knew things that were about to happen as though they had already happened.

Day Seven

31 But Peter insisted emphatically, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the others said the same. 32 They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." 33 He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. 34 "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch."

v. 31 – Peter insisted that Jesus was mistaken. He was ready to die for Jesus, or so he thought. While Peter has gotten most of the attention for this statement, all the disciples made it as well. As I mentioned yesterday, we don't know what's in us until someone or something squeezes us and what's in us then comes out. Peter was about to be squeezed and betrayal and disloyalty would manifest.

Talk is cheap, as the disciples proved here. They all proclaimed their loyalty but soon would show their cowardice. Yet I should not be too hard on them. They were about to face a situation that they had never dreamed they would face, even though Jesus had warned them about many times. While they were to fail in a few hours, they would all distinguish themselves in the long-run. They would indeed prove that they were willing to give their lives by doing just that.

Failure is a part of everyone's walk with the Lord. The beauty is that failure isn't the final chapter unless we allow it to be. **Are you struggling with some failure in your life? Can you release it to the Lord today and carry on in God's will for your life? Can you forgive yourself? Forgive others who hurt you?**

v. 32 – They all walked across town and went to a place that still exists today, with olive trees that were probably on the grounds that very night. He gave them instructions to sit there while He prayed. Simple enough orders. It's hard to do nothing sometimes. **How do you handle inactivity? Can you sit and relax or do you always have to be on the move?**

v. 33 – Jesus singled out three men to accompany Him to His prayer place. He had taken these men with Him before, but I still wonder how the others felt about that. In Luke, we learn that they had a dispute during the Last Supper as to who was the greatest among them. Now Jesus was taking three of them with Him while the others stayed behind. It would seem that Jesus was promoting them over the others.

Why did He do this? I would think that Jesus liked to be with certain of the disciples more than others. He loved them all but had some that He got along with better. This isn't wrong behavior; it was part of Jesus' humanity. You have friends that you would choose to spend time with. I don't think this is any different. Plus Jesus was preparing those three for special duty, since not all have the same callings.

v. 34 – Jesus began to agonize over the travail that He was about to face. He was fully God and yet fully man. Man has a will to live and Jesus knew He was about to die, cut off from God, family and friends. It was almost too much for Him to bear. He was sorrowful beyond measure.

Oh Lord, I thank You for your sacrifice on the cross. I also thank You for what you endured as You approached the cross. Lord, may I handle my own suffering and cross as You handled Yours, with grace and dignity. You embraced Your pain but didn't run from it. I want to be like You, but I need Your help to do so.