

Mark 14

Last Week:

- The scribes were asking Jesus what is the greatest commandment of all? To love God and love others is the answer.
- The story of the widow giving two mites.
- The Lord giving His Olivette Discourse teaching on the end times and the Tribulation.

¹ After two days it was the Passover and *the Feast of Unleavened Bread*. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take Him by trickery and put *Him* to death. ² But they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar of the people.”

The Passover was a Jewish holiday to commemorate God delivering the Jews from Egypt and their slave-like conditions. The short version of the history of this is God was going to deliver the last of the 10 plagues that He leveled on Egypt due to Pharaoh’s unwillingness to let the Jews go into the wilderness and worship. On a specific night, God would move across the land of Egypt and kill the firstborn – both man and beast

The Lord told Moses to tell the people that if they wanted to avoid this plague, the people were to sacrifice an unblemished lamb and sprinkle the blood on the doorposts of their homes. When God went across the land and saw the blood on the doorposts, He would pass over and spare that home’s first born. It would be this event that would get Pharaoh to agree to let the Nation of Israel go. As a testimony to this beautiful and powerful display of love and mercy, the Jews held a Passover feast every year.

John the Baptist, referring to Jesus, said in John’s Gospel, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” The Passover Lamb was a fore-shadowing of Jesus being the sacrificial Lamb of God on behalf of us and for our sins. The Jewish leaders did not want to kill Jesus on the Passover day as they feared the people would not respond well. However, to Jesus, it was vital that He be sacrificed on the Passover to satisfy the far better fulfillment of a testimony to God’s merciful forgiveness for those who believe.

³ And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper (*how’s that for a label?*), as He sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured *it* on His head. ⁴ But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, “Why was this fragrant oil wasted? ⁵ For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.” And they criticized her sharply. ⁶ But Jesus said, “Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me. ⁷ For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always. ⁸ She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. ⁹ Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.”

The scene is just before the last supper. A woman pours an entire flask of perfume on Jesus. This was very valuable stuff – I mentioned last week that a denarius was the equivalent of day’s wage in those times. Therefore, for it to be worth more than 300 denarii, this would be almost a full-year’s wage. This gospel mentions some of the disciples were upset thinking this was a waste of money, and it could have been given to the poor. John’s gospel points out who is saying this is Judas. He was the keeper of the money. I’m not buying he’s thinking this money could have been used for the poor.

Jesus rebukes the criticism of this woman and claims what she’s done is a good thing. By saying she was anointing His body for burial is as clear a revelation that Jesus is fully aware what is about to happen to Him. I find it interesting that Jesus acknowledges that His gospel will be preached to the whole world. Finally, despite Judas’ claim of what this woman did was a waste, I believe whatever you give to Jesus Christ – regardless of if it’s money, time, or anything else, it will never be wasted.

¹⁰ Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Him to them. ¹¹ And when they heard *it*, they were glad and promised to give him money. So, he sought how he might conveniently betray Him.

Jesus' public rebuking of Judas to leave this woman alone appears to have been the straw that broke the camel's back for him. He left the group and went to the chief priests to concede to betray the LORD. Our reading tells us he would agree to take money for this, but another gospel points out it only took 30 pieces of silver to get Judas to pave the way to Jesus' assassination. That is serious hard-heartedness.

¹² Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover *lamb*, His disciples said to Him, "Where do You want us to go and prepare, that You may eat the Passover?" ¹³ And He sent out two of His disciples and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him. ¹⁴ Wherever he goes in, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?"' ¹⁵ Then he will show you a large upper room, furnished *and* prepared; there make ready for us." ¹⁶ So His disciples went out, and came into the city, and found it just as He had said to them; and they prepared the Passover. ¹⁷ In the evening He came with the twelve. ¹⁸ Now as they sat and ate, Jesus said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you who eats with Me will betray Me." ¹⁹ And they began to be sorrowful, and to say to Him one by one, "*Is it I?*" And another said, "*Is it I?*" ²⁰ He answered and said to them, "*It is* one of the twelve, who dips with Me in the dish. ²¹ The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had never been born."

Not unlike the story of the colt that Jesus rode in on Palm Sunday, Jesus has some of the disciples go arrange for a place to have the Passover meal. This place is known as the "Upper Room," and it is the place that Leonardo da Vinci imagined and painted in his famous artwork, The Last Supper.

While they're eating, Jesus announces to the attendees that someone will betray Him. Dumbfounded, one by one each ask Him if it's them. It would be hard for me to stomach Judas asking Jesus if it is him, but I would not be surprised if he did. When you are that lost and following the temptations of Satan, you will be blown away at how quickly you can destroy your character. I have a sign in my office that says, "Once you've given up your integrity, everything else is a piece of cake."

Jesus then lays out what I think is the most chilling words He can say about someone when He pronounces the woe to the person who is going to betray Him, "It would have been good for that man if he had never been born." There are people throughout the world today who are multi-billionaires that are living extravagantly. I guess you could say they have it all. Yet, if they reject Jesus as Judas did, the LORD's pronouncement on them is no different. It would have been better for them that they not been born at all.

²² And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave *it* to them and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." ²³ Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave *it* to them, and they all drank from it. ²⁴ And He said to them, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many."

With this setting and these words, Jesus is replacing the old remembrance of what God did for the Nation of Israel in delivering them from the bondage of Egypt. As miraculous as that deliverance was, it was merely a foreshadowing of the far greater deliverance of Him being the true Passover Lamb of God. Jesus, in John 6:35, labeled Himself the Bread of Life. In breaking the bread – in the breaking of His body on the cross, He now is telling us to remember Him.

In asking us to drink from the cup, the contents are to be symbolic of the blood He shed for the remission, or forgiveness, of the sins to those who believe. By taking the bread and cup in remembrance

of the LORD, we are communing with Him. We are coming into agreement and affirming our faith and gratitude for what He did for us. This is why we call it Communion.

²⁵ Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.” ²⁶ And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus is sending everyone a message in verse 25 – that there is life after this one. His kingdom is a spirit kingdom, and He is the King. I believe He will drink that new fruit of the vine when the entirety of the church is gathered before Him not long after the Rapture.

The tradition to conclude a Passover meal was to sing Psalm 118, which is interestingly, a Messianic psalm. I can’t wait to hear Jesus sing – I’m sure it will be the most beautiful voice. I’m hoping I have a better singing voice in heaven because the one I have now makes dogs howl and cry in pain.

²⁷ Then Jesus said to them, “All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: ‘I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’” ²⁸ “But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.” ²⁹ Peter said to Him, “Even if all are made to stumble, yet I *will* not *be*.”

Verse 27 is a quote from Zechariah 13:7. This is one of some 300 prophecies from the Old Testament – most of which were fulfilled by Jesus in His first coming. He knows that true prophecy must be fulfilled, so He tells His twelve friends that He’s been with, teaching, caring for, and loving for three years nonstop that they are going to scatter and leave Him this night.

Now we get to Peter’s response. Before we get into what he’s about to say and what we know will happen, I have no doubt that his faith and love for Jesus was 100% genuine. I’m certain he truly believed he would not stumble – he would not be scattered from Jesus. I believe that what Jesus is about to say to Peter was not said in anger or frustration. I say this because of what the LORD’s going to say shortly in the Garden of Gethsemane.

³⁰ Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you that today, *even* this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.” ³¹ But he spoke more vehemently, “If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!” And they all said likewise.

The LORD delivers a no-doubt tough to hear and very short-term prophecy that before the rooster crows twice, Peter will deny him three times. I’m certain this was devastating for Peter. Again, I completely believe in his heart and mind, He meant what he said to Jesus. There are several reasons for Peter’s failure, which I will get into a bit later. One of them, though is right here. He is arguing with the Word of God – Jesus was called the Word in John’s opening to his gospel. I love what Chuck Smith said about this issue, “If you’re arguing with the Word of God, you’re wrong.” Since the Word of God is the truth, then whatever argument one makes against it must be a lie.

³² Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” ³³ And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. ³⁴ Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, *even* to death. Stay here and watch.”

The Garden of Gethsemane, at the time of Jesus, was really an olive orchard – it wasn’t really a garden. Today, there is a walled off area that is more like a large garden that is allegedly where this scene is taking place. Having been at this place myself, it’s an emotional thing to be walking in this garden – thinking what Jesus was going through because of my sins.

He asks all the disciples to sit while He prays, but He takes His inner circle of Peter, James, and John further away. He’s really feeling the emotions of what He’s about to go through. In another gospel, His anxiety was so great that He was sweating blood. This is a real thing – it’s called hematidrosis. While

I'm certain a component of Jesus' anxiety was the knowledge that He was going to be beaten, scourged, and killed, I believe there were two bigger reasons for the depth of His state of mind.

First, as the Lamb of God on the cross, He would be the representation of all of humanity's sin. He would become the fulfilment of the animal sacrifices who were the substitutes for the Jews' sins. This is the holy Son of God who lived a sinless life willingly transforming Himself to be our sin. Sin is something He never experienced before. We cannot understand, but we should try, to comprehend how completely opposite holiness and sin is. It is as different as pure black and pure white. More importantly, they cannot coexist.

Secondly, because He would become our sin, the Father could not look upon Him as the Father is holy. Therefore, for the first and only time in eternity, Jesus would be separated from His Father. I believe the true oneness that exists between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is so deep, so pure, and so perfect that the concept that Jesus would be apart from this oneness, along with Him taking on our sin was what was truly crushing Him. Out of this despair we're about to listen to the words that clearly demonstrated His humanness.

³⁵ He went a little farther, and 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. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You *will*."

Falling down under the heaviness of what is happening, He calls out to His Father beginning with the truth that with God, all things are possible. When we pray, it is always a good thing to repeat truths of God found in the Scriptures. I believe He likes to hear these citations – it's an acknowledgment of the depth of the truth of His Word. Moreover, I believe it is helpful for us to say them out loud to affirm to ourselves they are true. In His humanity, He asks the Father to take this cup of His Father's wrath away from Him.

However, notice there is a semi-colon after this request. That indicates there is a pause in this scene. I like what Chuck Smith speculated what may have happened during this pause. He suggested the possibility that the Father gave to Jesus the vision that we're given in Revelation 5. The scene is the future in heaven. We find the entirety of the church is gathered around God's throne (which means we will be in this scene), and Jesus is given a scroll. This scroll is the title deed to the earth and its inhabitants signifying Jesus' completed victorious redemptive works.

I believe it was at this moment; Jesus found the power – given to Him by His Father through prayer – to go through what He was about to go through. It was through prayer that Jesus won the victory. Yes, He had to go through what He went through to execute the victory. However, the power He needed to execute the victory was found in prayer. We need to remember this. When we're under attack or feeling lost, the best path to victory is to seek God to maybe not give you the answers you're looking for but give you the ability to see you through the trial.

Jesus then completes His request with His newfound power given to Him by His Father with the famous, "*nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will*." He could say that because He was given what He needed from the Father. One last comment on this moment that would lead to our being saved, adopted children of God. Jesus confirmed that with God, all things are possible. This is the truth. Think about this. What was, in light of all things are possible, the Father's answer to His Son's request to take the cup from Him? "No." God, with all His power, wisdom, and genius did not have an alternative for His beloved, only begotten Son. The ONLY way for sin to be forgiven was for His Son to die.

It is this revelation to me that brought the seriousness of sin to the forefront of my brain and heart. Woe to any pastor and or Bible teacher who downplays or even rejects the seriousness of sin. One day, each of us will come face-to-face with Jesus. I am a long way from perfect, but I can't imagine having to face Jesus and, as a teacher of His Word, having to admit that I devalued what He did at the cross. That is what people are doing when they downplay or water down the depth of the evil of sin. I don't have those kind of guts.

³⁷ Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour? ³⁸ Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.” ³⁹ Again He went away and prayed and spoke the same words. ⁴⁰ And when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him.

Jesus has now prayed twice – speaking the same words signifying it’s ok to repeat a prayer. The disciples can’t stay awake. Is Jesus annoyed that His friends can’t stay awake and pray for Him – or even keep an eye on Him? Probably, but I don’t think He’s angry with them. I say this because we have another semi-colon in this moment before they must have briefly woke up but were unable as to what to say. I wouldn’t be surprised during this pause that Jesus looked upon His sleeping friends, in love, and prayed for each one of them. Please keep this in mind when you think you’ve let the LORD down. He knows you. He knows you’re redeemed heart for Him is legitimate, but while the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak.

⁴¹ Then He came the third time and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴² Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.” ⁴³ And immediately, while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.

After His third prayer time with the Father, He hears a multitude from the religious leaders coming to take Him away. He tells the disciples to wake up as it’s game time. Judas is with them, and we learn.....

⁴⁴ Now His betrayer had given them a signal, saying, “Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him and lead *Him* away safely.” ⁴⁵ As soon as he had come, immediately he went up to Him and said to Him, “Rabbi, Rabbi!” and kissed Him. ⁴⁶ Then they laid their hands on Him and took Him.

The signal from Judas to the multitude was he would give Jesus a kiss. If you want to really be disgusted with this guy, the Hebrew word for kiss used here is that of a passionate kiss. It’s also interesting that nowhere in the gospels do we ever hear Judas call Jesus the Lord.

⁴⁷ And one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. ⁴⁸ Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? ⁴⁹ I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.” ⁵⁰ Then they all forsook Him and fled.

In another gospel, we learn that it was Peter who struck the servant of the high priest with the sword. Jesus would tell him to stop swinging, picked up the man’s ear, put it back, and healed it. The LORD points out the silliness of the size of the contingent coming to get Him. They’re treating Him like He’s some monstrous criminal. They could have just taken Him peacefully while He was teaching in the temple. The real reason for this display? The Scriptures must be fulfilled. What was being fulfilled? With the size and power of the contingent, it would drive the disciples to flee away from Jesus. Remember, the sheep will be scattered because of His offense.

⁵¹ Now a certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around *his* naked *body*. And the young men laid hold of him, ⁵² and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked.

None of the other gospels have this two-verse scene. Mark’s accounting of his gospel is largely taken from Peter with the possibility of Paul throwing in some commentary. Mark was only about 12 years old when Jesus was alive. Bible scholars believe that this boy in these two verses is actually Mark.

This is his only personal experience with Jesus. Is it an essential thing to know? – No. However, I do love that it was important to the Holy Spirit to convince those who compiled the Scriptures to leave this personal touch in.

⁵³ And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and with him were assembled all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes.

There were two chief priests for the Jews. There was the one that the Romans would choose – he would be more politically inclined. This was Caiaphas. The other chief priest would be the one the people would choose – he would be more dedicated to keeping the Law. This was Annas.

⁵⁴ But Peter followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he sat with the servants and warmed himself at the fire. ⁵⁵ Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death but found none. ⁵⁶ For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree. ⁵⁷ Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying, ⁵⁸ “We heard Him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.’” ⁵⁹ But not even then did their testimony agree.

Proving what a sham this arrest was, the religious leaders can’t come up with a single convictable reason. People were making stuff up, and the fruit of lies came forth – they didn’t agree. That’s the beauty of the truth – there is no alternative. They misrepresent Jesus’ words when He said the temple will be destroyed and in three days it will be built again without hands. He was speaking of His own body.

⁶⁰ And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, “Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?” ⁶¹ But He kept silent and answered nothing. Again, the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, “Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?”

At this point, Jesus is fulfilling the prophecy in Isaiah 53:7 where it foresees the Messiah being silent like a lamb led to slaughter. Having failed to cook up any legitimate charges, one of the high priests point-blank asks Jesus if He is the Messiah. Now it’s time for Him to speak.

⁶² Jesus said, “I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven.” ⁶³ Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “What further need do we have of witnesses? ⁶⁴ You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?” And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death. ⁶⁵ Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, “Prophecy!” And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands.

Jesus told the truth. He is the Messiah. He then tells the high priest about what it will be like the next time He comes. Proving the high priest’s question was not legitimate – it was only asked in hopes Jesus would validate the high priest’s preconceived conclusion. The high priest shouts his evil victory cry and pronounces Jesus words being blasphemous. The herd of jackals give Him the death sentence. Then some of them start spitting on Him, they blindfold Him and start hitting Him. Getting hit when you’re blindfolded or don’t know it’s coming is way worse than when you do. This was also a fulfilled prophecy – Isaiah 52:14 predicted the Messiah’s appearance would be more marred than any other man. And He did this all for me and you.

⁶⁶ Now as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came. ⁶⁷ And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, “You also were with Jesus of Nazareth.”

⁶⁸ But he denied it, saying, “I neither know nor understand what you are saying.” And he went out on the porch, and a rooster crowed. ⁶⁹ And the servant girl saw him again, and began to say to those who stood by, “This is *one* of them.” ⁷⁰ But he denied it again. And a little later those who stood by said to Peter

again, “Surely you are *one* of them; for you are a Galilean, and your speech shows *it*.” ⁷¹ Then he began to curse and swear, “I do not know this Man of whom you speak!” ⁷² A second time *the* rooster crowed. Then Peter called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him, “Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.” And when he thought about it, he wept.

We conclude Chapter 14 with Peter’s failure to live up to Jesus’ promise to not be offended and scatter with the rest of the disciples. He, as the LORD told him he would, deny Jesus three times before the rooster crowed twice. I don’t believe Peter failed the LORD because He didn’t love Him or believe in Him. His failure had four components:

1. Instead of praying like Jesus did in the garden, he slept. Remember, Jesus had to win the spiritual battle in prayer before He could win the physical battle.
2. He had too much confidence in himself. Paul spoke of the believer’s better mindset in 2 Corinthians 11:30, “If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.” This is a paradox – to emphasize weakness, but when we do, we are opening the door for God to give us His far greater strength than ours.
3. He followed Jesus from afar. The further we drift away from Jesus, the more room we allow Satan to attack us. I love the Discovery Channel Planet Earth shows. When they show a predatory pack on the attack, a common tactic is to separate their victim from the herd. We need to stay as close to Jesus as we can to give us the best odds of staying safe.
4. He dwelled with non-believers warming himself. When we choose to spend dedicated time with people who are anti-God, we are putting ourselves in a potentially vulnerable state. Here we have big, tough Peter who I believe genuinely loved the Lord collapse before a little girl. Never, ever under-estimate the power of the enemy and your susceptibility to his temptations.

Let’s get to the questions:

1. Does God’s sacrificial love motivate you to love similarly?
2. Have you ever done a good thing for God you thought was wasted?
3. Have you ever had a Peter-like denial in your life?
4. How do you think you draw strength/power through prayer?