

Betrayed *and* Arrested



SABBATH AFTERNOON

CLIMAX OF THE AGES. Our final three lessons in Mark's story of Jesus focus on about 72 hours, the crisis point in the life of Jesus.

The next three lessons are locked together. Each contains events and decisions that affect the final outcome. In this week's study we see Jesus wrestling in the Garden of Gethsemane, struggling with the agony of becoming the Sin Bearer for the world. If He turns back, we are eternally lost. Next week we will follow Him to the Cross, where Satan hurls all his assembled schemes in the greatest effort to defeat Him. If Satan succeeds, we are eternally lost. In the final lesson we see Jesus dead, laid in a stone-cold tomb. If His body continues to lie there, all His life and teachings, all His sufferings and death have been in vain—and we are eternally lost. Indeed, the stakes are high.

The Week at a Glance: How did Judas justify his betrayal of Jesus? Why did Jesus say that He would not drink of the “fruit of the vine” until we were in the kingdom of God? Why did Peter deny Christ despite his strong affirmation that he would never do that? What does it mean to call God “Abba”? Why did the disciples all fail Christ so miserably in His climactic hour?

Scripture Passage for the Week: Mark 14:1-51.

Memory Text: “‘Abba, Father,’ he said, ‘everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will’” (*Mark 14:36, NIV*).

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, June 11.*

The Betrayal Plot *(Mark 14:1-11).*

Read Mark 14:3-10 along with John 12:1-8; from the two accounts, piece together the best you can why it was after this incident that Judas went and betrayed Jesus.

What's so frightening about the story of Judas is how easily a human being can be deceived into believing that his or her action, no matter how bad, is right.

What was the issue that got some people upset in this account? Was it not, in and of itself, a "valid" point?

In Mark's account, a number of the disciples, not just Judas, were upset about the "waste" of the money. How might the fact that others complained have helped Judas be convinced that his indignation was indeed well-grounded?

It's interesting how Mark 14 begins: The leaders are looking for a way to put Jesus to death. Then, we are given this incident with this woman and Christ's rebuke to those disciples who "had indignation within themselves" over what she did. The next thing we know, Judas goes to the leaders and gives them what they were looking for. (Luke does the same thing but in a different way: *see Luke 22:1-4.*) Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Mark apparently wanted to show the reader how it was this incident that pushed Judas into his terrible betrayal. Notice, too, how the theme of money plays prominently in both Simon's house and with Judas and the leaders. That should tell us something about how the devil (*Luke 22:3*) uses our weak points to gain control of our minds.

We stand horrified at Judas, and yet, none of us are immune to the same principle: that of being swept away by cherished sin until we, too, betray our Lord. What was the only thing that could have saved Judas, and the only thing that can save us? *Mark 8:34.* How do we make this real in our lives?

Key Text: *Mark 14:24, 25*

Teachers Aims:

1. To understand the depth of Christ's sacrifice.
2. To stress that while Christ's sacrifice was necessary, individual actors in the events chose to do what they did.
3. To encourage us to persevere in our faith despite our inadequacies.

Lesson Outline:

I. Beginnings of Betrayal (*Mark 14:10, 11*).

- A. Judas demonstrates how we are all vulnerable to temptation.
- B. Judas' behavior was to some extent reinforced by the other disciples.
- C. At almost any point, Judas still could have been saved.

II. The Last Supper (*Mark 14:22*).

- A. The rite commemorating the Last Supper (Communion) is perhaps the most universal Christian practice.
- B. Jesus connected the Last Supper with His death.
- C. The hope of the Second Coming is central to understanding Communion and Christ's sacrifice.

III. Vigil and Arrest (*Mark 14:32-49*).

- A. Christ's agony in anticipation of His impending separation from the Father was real.
- B. The seeming uncertainty of His situation forced Jesus to rely on faith.
- C. Peter's initial failure occurred because he was tempted to trust his own strength.

Summary: In affirming Jesus' divinity, it is important to remember that His death and suffering were real. We, just as much as the people and events surrounding Jesus, are participants in the causes and effects of these most important events in history.

COMMENTARY

Our study this week (*Mark 14:1-50*) presents various human responses to the Cross. It also studies the Lord's Supper as a memorial to Jesus' death and Jesus' struggle in Gethsemane.

I. The Cross: Human Responses.

Our lesson records three possible responses to the Cross.

Acceptance (*Mark 14:3-9*). In Simon's house, Mary of Bethany broke "an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard" (*vs. 3, NKJV*) with which to anoint Jesus, thus honoring His death.

Her action aroused instant criticism. Why this waste? cried

The Last Supper *(Mark 14:12-26)*

The last meal of Jesus with His disciples has been commemorated by Christians from the beginning of the church. Some twenty years after Jesus sat down with the Twelve on that last Thursday night, the followers of Jesus in Corinth, probably meeting in a house church, gathered to celebrate the Lord's Supper (*1 Cor. 11:17-22*). Paul wrote to them to correct abuses that had come into their practices. Today, almost all Christian churches observe the Supper, but the understanding of its meaning varies considerably.

Read Mark 14:24, 25. **What is Jesus saying here? How do you see here a clear reference to the Second Coming? Why would He be talking about the Second Coming at this time, in the context of His own death?**

Look at what Jesus is saying, not just to His disciples but to us, as well. His words reveal the closeness, the bond, the unity He feels with those who will be with Him in “the kingdom of God.” He’s not going to drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God has come (*see Luke 22:18*); that is, until all of us who are saved by this shed blood will be there with Him. “But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom” (*Matthew 26:29*). In other words, not until we are there to drink with him will He Himself drink. Again, we have to remember who is speaking to us (*John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16, 17; Heb. 1:2*)—and yet, He views us with such a sense of closeness? What a testimony to God’s love!

Notice, too, how Christ places His shed blood at the center of everything here; it’s only because of that blood that we can one day be with Him in the “kingdom of God” and drink with Him the “fruit of the vine,” symbolic of that blood. How inadequate any theology that lessens the centrality of Christ’s shed blood to the plan of salvation!

Think about what Christ said here about not drinking the fruit of the vine until we are with Him in the kingdom. What kind of comfort, hope, and assurance does that give you? How can this wonderful revelation of God’s character help you through a present discouragement?

some, with Judas leading the attack (*see John 12:4, 5*). How many poor could have been helped? But money is no measure of the heart's gratitude. Jesus saw in Mary's act her acceptance of the Cross and defined her devotion as one who anointed His body for burial (*Mark 14:8*). "Through His grace she became a partaker of the divine nature."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 568.

Betrayal. Jesus' recognition of Mary was the final act that led Judas "to the chief priests to betray Him" (*Mark 14:10, NKJV*). Judas's betrayal was slow and imperceptible. Self dominated Judas so much that discipleship for him was just a way to achieve one's own glory. All He could see was money; all he could sense was the immediate. He was totally insensitive to the truth that life consists of more than the material. The kingdom of Judas had no room for the Cross. And so betrayal.

Failure. When Jesus predicted Peter would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed twice, Peter persisted that He would not and that he was even ready to die with Jesus (*Mark 14:27-31*). Peter was too self-confident and impulsive to recognize the perils of discipleship or the power of the tempter. When the time came, Peter not only denied ever knowing Jesus but "began to curse and to swear" to that effect (*vss. 66-72*). Remorse, however, followed denial; and Peter wept bitterly. Tears of repentance are a good place for us to start again. Peter did just that, and what an apostle of the Cross he became.

II. This Is My Body; This Is My Blood.

Jesus founded the Lord's Supper on the eve of the Cross. The Supper is a reminder that "the same night in which He was betrayed" (*1 Cor. 11:23, NKJV*) He became the Paschal Lamb. The bread and the wine are symbols of His body about to be broken and His blood about to be shed for the remission of sins (*Mark 14:24; see also Matt. 26:28*).

Jesus' assertion that His blood was "shed for many" (*Mark 14:24*) is crucial to experiencing and appreciating salvation. His blood speaks about sin. Sin is real. It is costly. Sin's grip is so immense and deadly that forgiveness of it and freedom from its power and guilt are impossible without the "precious blood of Christ" (*1 Pet. 1:19*).

As He concluded the Supper, Jesus vowed not to drink of the vine until they were together again in the Father's kingdom (*Matt. 26:29, NKJV*). This vow gives the Lord's Supper an eschatological thrust. With our experience firmly rooted in the Cross, we anticipate the Second Coming.

III. Gethsemane: Accepting the Cup.

Gethsemane was the last battle Jesus fought before the Cross. The importance of this battle lay in the temptation that even then He

Peter's Failure (*Mark 14:27-31, 66-72*).

Jesus foretold that Judas would betray Him (*Mark 14:21*). He also predicted that Peter would deny Him (*vs. 30*). But Judas and Peter were not preordained by God to fail. To God, all things past, present and future are known; He sees what will happen, but that does not negate freedom of choice. Jesus said what He said only because He knew what they would do; if Peter and Judas wouldn't have made those choices, Jesus would not have made those predictions.

How far did Peter feel ready to go in following Jesus? Do you think he meant what he said? (*Mark 14:27-31*).

How like Peter we each are! How quick to affirm, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I" (*vs. 29*). And Peter meant his words. So do we, as we make promises to God, but often we find ourselves again with Peter, broken, weeping, having failed the Lord. We each have to learn the lesson that Peter learned: to promise does not guarantee victory. We need to learn to look away from our own strength and resources and rely wholly on Christ for victory. If Peter had been quicker to speak of Christ than of himself, the story might have been quite different.

Notice, too, that Peter wasn't the only one who claimed that no matter what, even death, they wouldn't deny Jesus (*vs. 31*). All the disciples made the same affirmation. However, when things really got hot, "they all forsook him, and fled" (*vs. 50*). Though the focus here is particularly on Peter, the others had a lot to learn, as well, about what it meant to follow Christ.

What words might Peter have said, or prayed, that could have revealed an attitude that might have spared him this terrible failure? Use the following texts to help you formulate the words: Ps. 56:1-3; Ps. 119:28; Luke 18:13; 2 Cor. 12:9, 10; Phil. 4:13. How might what you write down help fortify you for whatever temptations and challenges you face?

could choose to return to the Father. Nothing could have stopped Him, for He had not sinned. But Jesus was not on a self-discovery mission. His work was commanded by the Godhead, and as part of the Trinity He chose to take upon Himself the weakness of human flesh, and in that flesh defeat Satan.

Gethsemane is a series of lessons on spiritual survival in the midst of crisis. First, it shows us the place of prayer in our relationship with God. Only prayer can connect us with Him in order to do His will. “ ‘Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will’ ”

Inductive Bible Study

Texts for Discovery: *Mark 14:1-50, John 18:1-11*

① The woman who anointed Jesus’ feet (*Mark 14:3-9*) is the story of someone so passionate about grace that she does something totally impetuous. *Impetuous* is not a word most people would use to describe Adventists (*systematic*, maybe). Is impetuosity celebrated or condemned in your congregation? What kind of spontaneity would your congregation encourage? What would it discourage?

② It’s possible Judas’s motive in betraying Christ was an attempt to force Jesus into defending Himself by exercising His divine prerogatives and establishing His kingdom. If so, Judas seriously misinterpreted the nature of the kingdom Jesus came to establish. In the last two thousand years, Christians have a history of using unchristian methods to ostensibly build up God’s kingdom. What kind of kingdom does God want to establish in our lives? In our communities? How can we ensure that our methods are in harmony with Christ’s character?

③ Let there be no doubt: Peter meant it when he told Jesus, “ ‘Even if all fall away, I will not’ ” (*Mark 14:29, NIV*). But Peter didn’t know himself as well as Jesus knew him. When we stray from doing God’s will, we don’t often do it deliberately; we just don’t understand ourselves. What have you found the most helpful in seeing yourself as God sees you? How has that been helpful in your spiritual development?

④ The word Jesus used to address His Father, *Abba*, is an endearing term reserved for one of the most intimate human relationships—that of a parent and child. In what ways has God demonstrated His closeness to you? At what times in your life have you felt His nearness?

Abba! (*Mark 14:32-42*).

The Garden of Gethsemane was a favorite place for Jesus. He had often retreated there to find relaxation and respite from the crowds. This night, however, the place of peace became a place of agony.

Ponder the story of Gethsemane, reading and rereading it in the Gospel accounts (*Matt. 26:35-56, Mark 14:32-42, Luke 22:40-53, and John 18:1-12*). Notice that in His supplication to the Father, Christ used a term of endearment—*Abba*. It suggests deep affection; we could translate it as “Daddy.” Thus, amid the incredible suffering, the sense of separation between Himself and His Father, Jesus still trusted enough in the Father’s love that He would call Him by that term. What a testimony to raw, naked faith amid utter despondency.

Ellen White describes what Christ was to face on the cross: “Christ was now standing in a different attitude from that in which He had ever stood before. . . . Hitherto He had been as an intercessor for others; now He longed to have an intercessor for Himself.

“As Christ felt His unity with the Father broken up, He feared that in His human nature He would be unable to endure the coming conflict with the powers of darkness. . . . With the issues of the conflict before Him, Christ’s soul was filled with dread of separation from God. Satan told Him that if He became the surety for a sinful world, the separation would be eternal. He would be identified with Satan’s kingdom, and would nevermore be one with God.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 686, 687. And yet, even in anticipation of this, Christ could still cry out “Abba!”

Paul tells us that, as disciples of Christ who have been adopted into the family of God, we, too, cry out to our heavenly Father in this term of trust and affection—“Abba!” Read **Romans 8:15** and **Galatians 4:6** (and don’t forget to read them in context). What are they saying? What happened so that we, too, can call God “Abba?”

If someone were to ask you, “How can I develop the kind of relationship with God that is described in the above verses?” what would you say?

(*Mark 14:36, NKJV*). What is this cup Jesus dreaded? Christ’s cup “symbolized neither the physical pain of being flogged and crucified, nor the mental distress of being despised and rejected . . . but rather the spiritual agony of bearing the sins of the world, in other words, of enduring the divine judgment which those sins deserved.”—John Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (England: Intervarsity Press, 1986), p. 76.

Second, Gethsemane acknowledges that a substantial relationship with God is essential in facing any crisis. A person must be able to say, “The Lord is my shepherd” before he or she can affirm, “I shall not want.”

Witnessing

It leaves a bitter, bitter taste in your mouth. You see “red” because the raw, blinding anger coats everything around you. You may start to plot your own brand of revenge. Hurt washes over you. It seems capable of swallowing you up. You vow to **never** let someone get close enough to you to **ever** be able to do that to you again. You may begin to keep people at arms’ length; that way, you minimize the possibility of hurt. All these reactions, and more, are common responses to learning you’ve been betrayed.

Although our Lord suffered greatly as a result of a treacherous act of betrayal at the hand of one of His own disciples, He did not display a typical human response. Rather, He acknowledged the act (even while accepting Judas’s kiss of death in the process) in a nonthreatening manner and urged others around Him to do the same. His example often seems to be a hard one to follow.

Aren’t we guilty of the act of betrayal ourselves at times? Absolutely not, you might say. However, whenever we find excuses not to attend church, aren’t we deceiving God? When we miss out on the many blessings associated with faithful tithing, aren’t we defrauding God? When we fail to use a witnessing opportunity He has provided us, aren’t we renegeing on God? When we refuse to use our spiritual gifts as God would have us do, especially in the area of ministering to nonbelievers, aren’t we wasting God’s resources that He has entrusted to us?

As Peter did, we may deny our Lord, but our Lord will not deny us. He will not separate Himself from us; we must withdraw from Him for separation to occur. He has assured us He will forgive our repeated failures when they are accompanied by sincere prayers of contrition coming from the heart. Those who do not yet have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ need to hear His promises and His plan of redemption. God is looking to us for help in sharing His love and heavenly message. Let us daily answer His call to serve.

Jesus Arrested *(Mark 14:43-52)*.

In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus struggled with the future that the plan of redemption laid out for Him—and accepted it. Not His comfort but the bearing of humanity’s sins, not His will but the Father’s became His choice.

What was especially despicable about the manner in which Judas betrayed his Master? *(Mark 14:44-46)*.

The enemies of Jesus came after Him in the dead of night when the common people would not be present to oppose their efforts. However, they were concerned that the shadows of night might afford an opportunity for Jesus to escape; and once again Judas aided their purposes. Following a prearranged signal, he went ahead of the mob and kissed Jesus. The original text indicates that Judas didn’t just give Jesus an embrace, but he kissed Him several times so that Jesus’ enemies could move quickly to arrest Him.

But Judas and the mob need not have worried about Jesus’ escaping. Jesus had long foreseen this moment, had prepared for “this hour,” had made His decision during the preceding struggle in earnest prayer. Jesus made no attempt to escape or resist arrest.

How did the other disciples react when the mob arrested Jesus? *(Mark 14:47-50)*. **Why did they fail miserably when the test came to them? Was there any reason, given their past performance, to expect anything different from them?**

During the Last Supper Jesus had warned the disciples about the coming test. He singled out Peter, warning that Satan intended to make him an object of special attack (*see Luke 22:31-34*). But in the Garden the disciples slept instead of praying. Again Jesus tried to prepare Peter for what was coming (*Mark 14:37, 38*), but His warning went unheeded. When the test came, the disciples at first attempted to meet force with force. Peter’s response was to draw his sword and begin flailing about with it (*John 18:10, 11*). He and his companions were not in touch with their Master, whose kingdom is not of this world and who rejected physical force. So, the disciples’ feeble, worldly efforts failed, and they all fled.

All through the Gospels, the disciples make one mistake after another; yet, with the exception of Judas, God used them to form the core of the Christian church. What message of hope does this offer you?

Third, Gethsemane is a call to renounce self and to accept God's will, even when that will proves to be a bitter cup. "The awful moment had come—that moment which was to decide the destiny of the world. The fate of humanity trembled in the balance. Christ might even now refuse to drink the cup apportioned to guilty man. . . . He might say, Let the transgressor receive the penalty of his sin, and I will go back to My Father."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 690. But He chose to fulfill the mission for which He came.

Life-Application Approach

Icebreaker: Reflect on this prayer: "Thank you, Father, for these tears that have carried me to the depth of your love. How could I have known your fullness without the emptiness, your acceptance without the rejection, your forgiveness without my failure, our togetherness without that dreadful loneliness. You have brought me to Gethsemane, and oh, the joy of finding you already there! Amen."—Bonnie Barrows Thomas, in *Draper's Book of Quotations for the Christian World* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 1992), entry 1512.

Thought Questions:

① Judas has always been thought of as a bad guy, the man who betrayed Jesus, a traitor. But consider his intentions: Judas believed his actions would effectively force Jesus into a proactive role of establishing His kingdom. He believed his actions were justified. Why do you think Judas could not see beyond his perspective? Identify areas in the church where the Judas syndrome could be repeated.

② Jesus' reason for coming to this earth was to die for our sins. Monomania is fierce passion for one thing. Could Jesus be considered a monomaniac? Did He take on human form ONLY to save us from sin? If so, why did He heal the sick, recruit disciples, and tell parables? Why didn't He just come down, die, and leave? Explain.

Application Question:

In His darkest moment Jesus retreated to a quiet place to connect with His Father. He used prayer as a means of escape from the hardship and pain of reality. Compare and contrast prayer with the avenues of escape the world offers. How can prayer truly be a means of escape, as well as comfort? Identify the quiet places in your life.

Further Study: Study the parallel accounts of Jesus' betrayal and arrest in Matthew 26:1-56, 69-75; Luke 22:1-62; John 13; 18:1-11. Read Ellen G. White's "A Servant of Servants," "In Remembrance of Me," "Gethsemane," and "Judas," in *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 642-661, 685-697, 716-722.

"The awful moment had come—that moment which was to decide the destiny of the world. The fate of humanity trembled in the balance. Christ might even now refuse to drink the cup apportioned to guilty man. It was not yet too late. . . . Will the Son of God drink the bitter cup of humiliation and agony? Will the innocent suffer the consequences of the curse of sin, to save the guilty? The words fall tremblingly from the pale lips of Jesus, 'O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.'

"Three times has He uttered that prayer. Three times has humanity shrunk from the last, crowning sacrifice. But now the history of the human race comes up before the world's Redeemer. He sees that the transgressors of the law, if left to themselves, must perish. He sees the helplessness of man. He sees the power of sin. The woes and lamentation of a doomed world rise before Him. He beholds its impending fate, and His decision is made. He will save man at any cost to Himself."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 690-693.

Discussion Question:

Dwell more on this idea of Christ's not drinking of the fruit of the vine until we are all in the kingdom. What does it tell us about the character of God? Share with the class other examples of this same principle, that of someone not doing something until someone else could do it with them (for example, Uriah's not wanting to spend the night with his wife while his troops were still in battle; see 2 Sam. 11:11). How do these stories illustrate the point that Jesus was making?

Summary: Jesus has come to the last moments of His earthly life before His crucifixion. The plan first thought out in the days of eternity was now coming to fruition. With everyone else failing around Him, Jesus alone stood firm. The fate of the world depended upon it.