

The Gospel of Mark

Walking with the Servant Saviour

Lesson 18

Mark 14:1–42

Day One: A Plot is Devised

The final acts in Jesus' life and ministry were now unfolding as Mark sets the scene. The hours he carefully records in this chapter contain some of Jesus' most significant words and actions. It was two days before Passover and Jesus' enemies were looking for a way to take Him and put Him to death without causing an uproar among the people.

The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were celebrated by God's people in commemoration of their deliverance from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 12). The last of the miraculous plagues on Egypt occurred when God *passed over* the Israelite's homes marked by lamb's blood on the doorposts; but in the unmarked Egyptian homes the firstborn of every household died. This day of Passover was followed by the seven day Feast of Unleavened Bread, recalling the Israelite's quick escape from the Egyptians. Since they didn't have time to let their bread rise, they baked it without leaven (yeast), and they shared a special meal together that included a lamb, wine, and bitter herbs. (Eventually these eight days became known as the Passover Feast.) Every Jewish male over the age of twelve was required to attend this festival in Jerusalem.

Read Mark 14:1–2, 10–11; Matthew 26:1–5, 14–16; and Luke 22:1–6.

1. What was Judas' motive for going to the chief priests? How was he received?
Mark 14:10–11

2. Who caused Judas to act? Luke 22:3

3. Where did the religious leaders assemble to conceive their wicked plot?
Matthew 26:3

❖ What did they give Judas in return for his act of betrayal? Matthew 26:15

Judas was one of the twelve, counted among those closest to Jesus, yet Mark says that he *sought how he might conveniently betray Him*. For his betrayal he was paid thirty pieces of silver—the price for a slave. In return he made it easy for the religious leaders; he knew where to find Jesus and when He would be alone.

How is it that a man who had companioned with Jesus—who ate with Him, heard Him teach, saw the miracles and the healings—could so easily turn away from Him? Satan blinded Judas to the point that he was willing to reject Jesus in exchange for a mere sum of money. It was the ultimate act of betrayal, but why would Judas want to betray Him? It's very likely that Judas expected Jesus to become part of a political movement to overthrow the Roman government, and as the treasurer, Judas would occupy an important position. But listening closely to Jesus' teachings revealed otherwise; He did not come to set up an earthly kingdom but a heavenly one. *"He did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many"* (Mark 10:45). Realizing that his desire for status and success could not be met by following Jesus, Judas then sought the favor and reward of the religious establishment.

Come closer . . .

How well do you know Jesus? Do you understand His purpose for coming to this earth? Have you stepped into His plan for your life? Are you perhaps disillusioned by your own expectations of Him that you have turned elsewhere for fulfillment and satisfaction? Jeremiah 17:9 says, *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"* Be careful not to allow your heart to lead you down a path that would make it hard for you to return. Please share your thoughts.

Heartbeat . . . (Memory verse) *"And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.'" Luke 22:19*

Day Two: An Extravagant Display of Love

What to look for . . .

Beautifully encased between the religious leaders plan to arrest Jesus and the treachery of Judas is the contrast of Mary's love and devotion. Her example stands as a lasting testimony to the fact that true love cannot be restrained.

Read Mark 14:3–9; Matthew 26:6–13; and John 12:1–7.

Each evening during this final week, Jesus was returning to Bethany from Jerusalem, most likely to the home of His dear friends Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. On one of those evenings Jesus was invited to dine at the home of Simon the Leper. (His close friends were also present—see John 11:2.)

1. In your own words describe what Mary did. v. 3

This *alabaster flask* was a beautiful long vase of great value containing costly oil of spikenard, fragrant oil imported from the mountains of India. It was a common custom at Jewish meals for the honored guest to be anointed with oil, but not expensive oil.

2. According to John 12:3–5, what was this oil worth?

The use of this costly perfume represented anointing someone of royalty or high rank in society.

3. Mary's act brought mixed reviews; compare the disciples' response with that of Jesus.

When sharply rebuked by the disciples, Mary did not retaliate or try to defend herself; in fact we don't read of her speaking out on her own behalf. She was caught up in her expression of love for her Lord and He commended her for her unselfish act.

4. What lessons are to be learned from Mary's example in the following verses:

❖ v. 6

❖ v. 8

❖ v. 9

On this very special occasion, Jesus stated that Mary poured perfume on Him beforehand in preparation of His burial. It was a reminder to His followers of His upcoming crucifixion and burial. Mary, it appears, was the only one in the room to understand the significance of her act, and perhaps it was due to her priority to sit at Jesus' feet.

Selah . . .

Mary is remembered for her love—her unforgettable kindness to Jesus. Can you think of something you can give to Jesus as a token of your love for Him? He deserves your very best! The more you love Him, the more you want Him to know it. Please share your thoughts.

Review this week's memory verse.

Day Three: Denial and Remembrance

What to look for . . .

The sacrifice of the Passover lamb and the spilling of its blood served as a reminder of the deliverance of God's people from their bondage in Egypt. The event was but a foreshadow of Jesus' completed work on the cross when His blood would be spilled out in order to deliver all of mankind from the bondage of sin. It was on this last night with His disciples that Jesus would give the Passover celebration an entirely new meaning.

Read Mark 14:12–21.

1. The disciples were now looking to Jesus for directions. What question did they pose to Him? v. 12
 - ❖ Who was dispatched and, in one or two sentences, what did Jesus instruct them to do? vv. 13–15

It was clear that Jesus had already prearranged for the room and the details in order to secure privacy for this last meal with His disciples. Once again, the men found everything “*just as He had said to them*” (v. 16).

Selah . . .

The Lord’s followers didn’t know for sure what was around the next corner, but they were learning to trust Jesus for every detail of their needs—a lesson which would ensure God’s provision after He was gone. Think about it for a moment: do *you* have any idea what tomorrow will bring—or even today? What is your greatest concern right now? God knows what is up ahead; your part is to trust and obey and be ready to follow His lead! Please share your thoughts.

2. In the evening He came with the twelve; what did Jesus share with them as they all sat and ate? vv.18–21

- ❖ What was their response?

- ❖ Who was the betrayer?

- ❖ Jesus had to fulfill all that was written of Him, but what did He say about His betrayer?

Read Mark 14: 22–26; Matthew 26:20–30; Luke 22:14–20; and John 13:21–30.

The tradition of celebrating Passover included sharing a meal, singing songs, reading from Scripture, and praying together. After Jesus celebrated the *Passover* (and after Judas went out from them), He also initiated the *Lord’s Supper*, which is called *Communion*.

3. Jesus took two traditional parts—the *bread* and the *wine*—and gave them new meaning. What did each represent? v. 22

- ❖ In 1 Corinthians 11:24–25, how does Jesus personalize the bread and the cup?

The bread represents His broken body; the wine, His blood poured out for many (v. 24). He initiated a *new covenant* (agreement) between God and man that could not be altered, only accepted or rejected. In the Old Testament, God forgave the sins of the people as they brought animals to be sacrificed year after year. Under the new covenant, Jesus would die in the place of sinners and His sacrifice would never have to be repeated because His blood would once and for all remove the sins of those who put their faith in Him (see Hebrews 9:23–28). He was the perfect Lamb of God, allowing His blood to be shed (or *poured out*) on behalf of others. It is His sacrifice that has made us acceptable in God's eyes (Romans 3:21–24).

4. What did Jesus vow regarding the future of this celebration? v. 25

Selah . . .

As Jesus instituted the new covenant, He asked only one thing of those who participated: “*Remember Me.*” Could it be that He realizes how prone we are to forget? As often as we partake, we remember the Lord's death until He comes.

Day Four: Prayer in the Garden

What to look for . . .

For the second time in the same evening Jesus predicted that He would be denied and deserted. Once again there is a strong reaction to His words, but Jesus knew He would have to go to the cross alone. The events leading up to the cross were very trying for Jesus, but none more than the moments in the Garden of Gethsemane when He experienced the magnitude of what awaited Him.

Read Mark 14:27–42; and Matthew 26:31–46.

After the time spent with His disciples in the Upper Room, Jesus departed to *Gethsemane*, a garden situated in the Kidron Valley, just below the Mount of Olives. Eight of the disciples were told to sit down and pray while He went farther on.

1. Who did He take with Him, what followed, and why? vv. 33–34

❖ What one request did Jesus make of these men?

2. As Jesus went further to be alone with God, what was His plea? v. 35

Abba is the Aramaic word for *father*, implying intimate closeness. Jesus would have been able to use this term, as He was surrendered fully to the Father's will.

3. Jesus knew that God was capable of delivering Him from this hour, but what was His prayer? v. 36

4. When He returned to His men, what did He find them doing? How did He rebuke Peter? v. 37

❖ What did He again ask them to do, and why? v. 38

Again He went away and prayed and spoke the same words; when He returned, He found them sleeping, and they did not know how to answer Him (vv. 39–40).

❖ When He returned the third time, they were still asleep. What did Jesus say to them? vv. 41–42

The picture we have here of Jesus and the disciples represents what happens when Christians fail to pray. When we do not pray, Jesus in effect, moves on. If we want to see answers and be part of changing things, we must participate in what brings heaven's power down—the vital act of praying! Stay awake and alert—keep yourself prepared and ready!

Review this week's memory verse.

Day Five: Praying God's Purpose

It's time to do some *prayer walking*—not in the literal, but the *spiritual* sense. The Holy Spirit will lead you today as you consider three points from your lesson, write them in the form of a prayer, and lift them to the Lord. If practicing the presence of God is new to you—be patient—it will come, and you will be blessed!

“... We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.”

Romans 8:26-27 NLT

A prayer of sacrifice . . .

If you thought of something this week that you could give to Jesus (or do for Him) as a token of your love, would you lift that to Him in prayer?

A prayer of remembrance . . .

Looking back over the past week, would you say that you denied the Lord in your words and actions, or that you remembered Him and it made a difference in your response?

A prayer of perspective . . .

What have you learned from your lesson about keeping prayer a priority? What will you do to make this happen? Tell God about it.

Write out this week's verse from memory:

Notes

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