

Mark 14:12–31 — Jesus And Betrayal

September 20, 2020

Good morning. It is great to be together on the Lord's Day and to study God's Word. Before we open our Bibles, I wonder if you are familiar with a couple named the Rosenbergs. Julius is the name of the husband and Ethel the wife. Do any of you recognize their names? I can understand why their names don't ring a bell for most of you. They died more than 70 years ago.

In the 1950s, Julius worked for the U.S. government and had access to top secret United States military information. What people didn't know was that he and his wife were communist sympathizers.

Julius used his top secret military clearance to access the designs of United States radar, sonar, and jet propulsion engines. Most importantly, he accessed the blueprints for our nuclear weapon, and he gave them to Russia. At the time, the



United States was the only country in the world with nuclear weapons. All that changed after his betrayal. The Rosenbergs' sharing of our top secret military information brought Russia on par with the United States in the nuclear weapons race.

They were both caught and were executed for betraying their country. The crime was high treason. Most of us would agree with their death sentence. The world might be a different place today if they hadn't betrayed our country's nuclear secrets.

Have you ever felt like the Rosenbergs? Have you ever betrayed someone in a big way and stabbed him or her in the back? Have you ever betrayed God and failed him miserably? How many times have you promised God you would turn away from a favorite sin, but hours or days later broken your promise and gone right back to it? How many times have you been in public with your friends and a topic came up in conversation and rather than speaking the truth and being a light for Jesus, you kept quiet because you didn't want to face embarrassment and laughter from your friends, so you betrayed your love for Jesus? After betraying Jesus not just once, but many times in your life, do you ever wonder what God thinks of you? Do you ever wonder if God is so fed up with you he wants to get rid of you like our country did to the Rosenbergs? Today, we will find out how God treats people who betray him.

Last week, our family had a little last-minute COVID scare. Thankfully everyone is OK. Just to be safe, at the last minute, I asked Pastor Jordan to cover for me. He did a great job. I was watching online. I'm grateful God has allowed us multiple campuses so we have the option of asking another pastor to fill the pulpit in a last-minute crisis.

Last week, Pastor Jordan introduced us to Mark 14 and the first 11 verses. In those verses, we were introduced to a woman who anointed Jesus with expensive perfume because of her love and gratitude for him. We were also introduced to Judas, the one who would betray Jesus.

This morning as we continue in Mark, we are studying Mark 14:12-31. Two important things happen in these verses. First, Jesus celebrated the Jewish

Passover with his disciples. He explained to them how the Passover is a picture of what he came to do. He is the true Passover lamb that was killed. It is his blood that enables death to pass over God's people. As part of celebrating the Passover with his disciples, Jesus repurposed the Passover into the Lord's Supper, which is the communion celebration we participate in at church every month.

Second, we will see how Jesus handled betrayal by his closest friends. The first betrayal came from Judas. However, there was more than one betrayal. The second betrayal would be the rest of the disciples who would all fall away from Jesus. The third betrayal would be Peter, who would deny even knowing Jesus three times before sunrise the next day. In short, everyone betrayed Jesus. He headed to the cross alone.

There is a lot to cover in these verses so we will take two weeks to study them. This morning, we will focus on how Jesus handles those who betray him. Next week, we will focus on the Lord's Supper. This will be an exciting two weeks where we will discover things about Jesus and his final days that we have probably never seen before. Let's read the text, then get into our study.

And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him, "Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?" And he sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him, and wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' And he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; there prepare for us." And the disciples set out and went to the city and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover. And when it was evening, he came with the twelve. And as they were reclining at table and eating, Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me." They began to be sorrowful and to say to him one after another, "Is it I?" He said to them, "It is one

of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the dish with me. For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.” And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, “Take; this is my body.” And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.” And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. 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.’ But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.” Peter said to him, “Even though they all fall away, I will not.” And Jesus said to him, “Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.” But he said emphatically, “If I must die with you, I will not deny you.” And they all said the same. Mark 14:12–31 (ESV)

We will look at these verses under three headings. First, Jesus set up Passover. Second, Jesus changed Passover to the Lord’s Supper. Third, when we fail Jesus, he won’t fail us.

Jesus set up the Passover in secret.

And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him, “Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?” Mark 14:12 (ESV)

The Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Passover were often identified together and celebrated together. Frequently, they were lumped together and simply known as the Passover. Mark commented that this was the day when they sacrificed the Passover lamb. If you have followed along in our studies, you know we are in Jesus’ final week of life. We are on Thursday, which is the day Mark says the Passover lambs were sacrificed. This gets us into a little problem. Mark says a Passover lamb was sacrificed and Jesus’ last supper with his disciples was a Passover meal that he ate with them on a Thursday night, but the Gospel of John says Jesus died when the Passover lambs were being sacrificed on

Friday afternoon before the Passover. How do we solve this problem? It appears the timing is wrong in one of the Gospels.

There are a number of possibilities. I will give you the explanation that makes the best sense to me. As we learned in previous weeks, Jerusalem was packed during Passover. The ancient historian Josephus claims that in some Passovers more than a quarter of a million people visited the city. The problem was the city was not big enough to hold that many people. How do you have a Passover meal with that many people in town?

There is historical evidence that the Jews began hosting the Passover over two days instead of one to accommodate the large crowds. Jews from out of town coming from the area of Galilee could celebrate the Passover on Thursday night, which was a day early, while Judean Jews, who lived in Jerusalem or closer to Jerusalem, celebrated the Passover on Friday night, which was the traditional day. Jesus and his disciples, being from Galilee in the north, could celebrate the Passover on a Thursday night. That accommodation allowed Jesus to celebrate the Passover with his disciples on Thursday night but still die on Friday afternoon at the traditional time when the Passover lambs were slain for the Judean Jews.

Others point out that according to the Jewish reckoning of time —since the Jews counted days from sunset to sunset — Thursday after sunset was technically Friday, so the Passover could be celebrated on Thursday night and still be on a Friday. That is also a possible explanation.

What we do know is the Gospel of John — which tells us Jesus died when the Passover lambs were traditionally slain on Friday afternoon — and Mark — which tells us Jesus ate a Passover meal with his disciples on Thursday night after sunset — are not in conflict with one another. Somehow they are both true even if we don't understand all the details of how that worked.

Knowing that Jesus needed to celebrate the Passover, Jesus' disciples asked him where he wanted them to go to prepare for the Passover meal. You will remember Jesus' daily habit at this point was to teach in Jerusalem to the vast crowds during day but each evening he left town with the crowds and went back to the small village of Bethany. That was not unusual. During Passover, there were so many people in Jerusalem there was not enough room for everyone to sleep in the city. In the evenings, many in the crowds left the city to find lodging in the smaller villages surrounding the city. It is not different than when we travel and come to a city but find there is a conference in town so all the hotel rooms are booked. What do we do? We look for a small town on the outskirts of the city and find a hotel with vacancy there. That is exactly what Jesus was doing. It is why he returned to Bethany every night.

The Passover meal would break this habit. It was different. According to Deuteronomy 16:5-6, Jews were required to eat the Passover meal inside the city of Jerusalem at night. That is why the disciples asked Jesus what he wanted to do in order to arrange for the Passover meal since it had to be eaten in the city.

There is another interesting wrinkle to the story that I wasn't able to tell you about in last week's message when I wasn't here so let me share it now. Last week, Mark introduced us to Judas, who would betray Jesus. Those 11 verses from Mark 14:1-11 didn't just happen. They were a flashback to something that happened six days before this, even before the Triumphal Entry (See John 12:1-8). The Gospel of Mark doesn't tell us this is a flashback, but when we look at the same event in the Gospel of John and the Gospel of Matthew, we find the woman who anointed Jesus with perfume was Mary. We also learn that it was at that time when Judas, who was a thief and who loved to steal from the money bag, made the decision to betray Jesus. When Judas saw Mary "waste" that expensive perfume by pouring it on Jesus instead of selling it so it would be turned into money that he could steal, he was furious. It was at that time, even before the Triumphal Entry, when Judas decided to betray Jesus, because Judas felt Jesus was not worthy of Mary's lavish love. After that time, even before the Triumphal Entry, Judas was looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus. Judas was looking for an opportunity to turn Jesus over to the Jewish authorities. The problem was Judas couldn't turn Jesus over to the authorities during the day around the massive crowds, because they would riot. In Mark 14:1, we saw the chief priests were determined to kill Jesus, but they couldn't do anything about it because of the large crowds around him. Each night, when the crowds died down, Jesus left the city with them because he slept in Bethany. All week Jesus was in the city, but he was never alone so Judas could betray him.

This would be different. This would be Judas' opportunity to finally betray Jesus, the Passover meal. It needed to be eaten in Jerusalem, and it would be eaten at night in a house away from crowds. This was the opportunity Judas was waiting for. Jesus knew it! Jesus knew that as soon as Judas knew where the Passover meal would be eaten by him at night in the city while Jesus was apart from the crowds, Judas would put his plan of betrayal into action.

Jesus couldn't let Judas betray him until he celebrated the Passover with his disciples and repurposed it into the Lord's Supper that we celebrate today. This is why Jesus set up the location of the Passover with his disciples in a very clandestine fashion. He wanted to keep the location of this meal a secret so none of the disciples, especially Judas, knows where this meal would take place so he could eat it with them in peace before being betrayed. This explains what happened next.

And he sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him, and wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' And he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; there prepare for us." Mark 14:13–15 (ESV)

He sent two disciples into the city. In Luke 22:8, we find these two disciples were Peter and John. As soon as they entered the city a man carrying a jar of water met them. Most likely, this was not supernatural knowledge. This was a prearranged undercover operation designed to keep the address of this Passover meal a secret. Apparently a man was waiting at the city gate with a water jar. As soon as he saw Peter and John, he picked it up and started walking. Peter and John knew that when they saw him do this, they should follow him to the location of the house. A man carrying a jar of water would stick out.

Historically, men did not carry jars of water. That was women's work. A man picking up a jar of water and carrying it would stick out in public like a man carrying a purse. There were no words exchanged between Peter, John, and the water-carrying man. It was an undercover operation.

When the man went into a house, they were to say, "The Teacher says, 'Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'" Notice, they were not to even use Jesus' name. This was an undercover operation.

The man who owned the home was aware that Jesus and his disciples were coming because he had set up a large upper room and furnished it for their use during the Passover.

My guess is the owner of the home apparently had a private conversation earlier in the week with Jesus and offered his large upper room to Jesus and the disciples for the Passover. Jesus took him up on the offer but told him to keep it a secret. Jesus and the man then agreed to the clandestine plans we just read about.

Remember why this was hidden. Jesus could not have Judas betraying him until after the supper was finished. Judas could not know where he was going or he would spill the beans to the authorities.

What does a room prepared for Passover look like? The original Passover was meant to be eaten in haste. It was an ancient version of fast food. Exodus 12:11 tells us how it was originally celebrated.

In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover. Exodus 12:11 (ESV)

By this time, tradition changed Passover. It was more relaxed. It was a feast similar to our Thanksgiving. In Jesus' day, the Jews ate the Passover following the Roman custom for banquets, and they ate at a low table in a "U" pattern known as a triclinia. They laid on couches with their weight on their left elbows and used their right hands to feed themselves. (This worked great unless you were left-handed.) Incidentally, the Gospel of John tells us Jesus was at the head of the table. He was the host of the meal. He was at the center of the "U".



On Jesus' left was the position of the most honored guest. On his right was the position of the second-most honored guest. According to John 13:23-26, guess who was sitting in the position of greatest honor next to Jesus, the person that if Jesus leaned back slightly he would put his head into his chest? It was Judas! Guess who was sitting in the position of second greatest honor? It was a person known as the disciple Jesus loved. We know his name as John. That is what a room prepared for the Passover looked like. That is who was seated around Jesus. That is how Jesus ate his final meal with his disciples. Let's get back to the text.

And the disciples set out and went to the city and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover. Mark 14:16 (ESV)

As we said, Jesus prearranged this. Jesus is clearly in control of all things that happened to him in this final week. Nothing took him by surprise. Nothing was out of his control. Jesus knew everything before it happened.

We saw the furniture in the room was prepared for the Passover. How did the John and Peter prepare the food for the Passover? It involved acquiring a lamb, having it sacrificed at the temple, purchasing unleavened bread, wine, bitter herbs—such as horseradish — and haroseth. What is that? It was fruit salsa. They dipped their bread in it. Remember they ate unleavened bread, which was like a chip, so they needed salsa to dip the chip in. It was made of fruit. The next time you go to a Mexican restaurant and love the chips and salsa, remember Jesus ate the Passover with his disciples, and he loved his version of chips and salsa too.

And when it was evening, he came with the twelve. And as they were reclining at table and eating, Jesus said, “Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.” Mark 14:17–18 (ESV)

Thursday evening rolled around, and Jesus showed up with the rest of the disciples. No doubt, Jesus never told them where they were going. They just needed to follow Jesus and the location of the Passover meal was a surprise. It was kept a secret so Judas couldn't spill the beans to the Jewish leaders and have Jesus arrested before it was time. Once Judas showed up at the meal, it was ready to be served. Judas didn't have an excuse to leave and inform the authorities. He had to wait until after the meal when Jesus intentionally gave Judas an excuse to leave the meal and betray him.

I am sure the meal was a blast. Everyone enjoyed the food and eating on couches. If you like to eat on the couch, tell your family you have biblical precedence. Everyone was happy. This was a highlight of their Passover week.

During the meal, Jesus dropped the bombshell. “One of you will betray me.” In the past Jesus told them many times that he would be betrayed to the chief priests and he would be crucified, but he had never told them who would betray him, until this moment. Jesus revealed his betrayer would be one of his closest friends sitting around the table eating with him that very night.

You can imagine the change in the room. Everyone went from loving the meal to literally feeling sick during the meal. Everyone started looking around the room trying to figure out who could be so evil as to betray Jesus to the authorities.

There is a little bit of interesting background at play in Jesus’ words. Many Bible scholars point out the words Jesus used in this moment contain a quote from Psalm 41:9.

Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me. Psalm 41:9 (ESV)

This was King David writing about the betrayal that took place in his life by a man named Ahithophel. Some of you may know the story. David’s two closest friends were Ahithophel and Hushai. When Absalom, King David’s son, betrayed his father, tried to steal the kingdom and kill his own father, Ahithophel, one of David’s closest friends, joined the conspiracy to overthrow David and kill him. Thankfully, God foiled the plot, and Ahithophel hung himself. Think about how David felt when that happened. One of his two closest friends joined in a plot to

overthrow him and kill him — a plot that was being carried out by David’s own son. I cannot imagine the pain in David’s heart and the sense of betrayal that took place in his soul.

When Jesus used these words he said, “We have an Ahithophel among us. One of my closest friends plans to betray me and plans to kill me, just like Ahithophel did to King David.” All the memories and emotions of the Old Testament story came rushing to the disciples’ minds.

Remember where Judas was sitting when Jesus spoke these words. He was in the place of honor, the second-most honored person in the room that night. He was sitting right next to Jesus during the meal. Nobody suspected Judas, or they would have jumped him. Peter would have put him in a headlock. Jesus’ head was just inches away from Judas’ heart. Is the depth of Judas’ betrayal becoming clearer? Is Jesus’ knowledge of what Judas would do to him becoming more apparent?

They began to be sorrowful and to say to him one after another, “Is it I?” He said to them, “It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the dish with me.” Mark 14:19–20 (ESV)

Everyone was shocked when Jesus said the person who would betray Jesus was one of the apostles in the room. One by one, every single disciple in the room privately asked Jesus during that meal, “Is it I?” They were horrified at the thought. In the Gospel of Mark, we see Jesus kept the identity of Judas as his betrayer a secret. Jesus simply said to the rest of the disciples, “Yes, it is one of you, one who is dipping their bread into the bowl of fruit salsa with me.”

The other Gospels give us a little more information of what took place, in the private conversations between John on the one side of Jesus and Judas on

the other side of Jesus. The Gospel of John tells us that John, who was in the position of second greatest honor, leaned his head back and put it on Jesus' chest. He did that to ask Jesus who it was that would betray him.

So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it." So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. John 13:25–26 (ESV)

Since everyone was laying on their sides, there were only two people Jesus could reach with his hand at the table, John on one side and Judas on the other side. John was already talking to him so he gave the bread dipped in fruit salsa to Judas on the other side of him. Look how kind and loving Jesus was to the one who would betray him. Jesus even dipped his chip in fruit salsa for Judas and gave it to him. That was an act of friendship and love.

Matthew tells us what happened when Judas, like the other disciples, asked Jesus if he was going to betray him.

Judas, who would betray him, answered, "Is it I, Rabbi?" He said to him, "You have said so." Matthew 26:25 (ESV)

This is amazing. Nobody knew who would betray Jesus but Jesus knew all about it. Jesus said to Judas, "Yes, it is you, and I know all about your plans even though you have told nobody."

Think about how kind and loving Jesus was to his betrayer. Earlier in the meal, Jesus acted like a servant, not an honored guest. He washed his disciples' feet. He washed Judas' feet! He seated Judas at the position of honor at the table. He dipped bread in fruit salsa and gave it to Judas as an act of friendship. He even told Judas that he knew about his plan to betray him. Jesus was so kind

to Judas. Jesus loved Judas. Jesus gave Judas every opportunity to repent, but Judas betrayed him anyway.

Nothing that happened to Jesus this final week was out of his control. Nothing that happened to Jesus in this final week took him by surprise. Nothing was a mistake. Jesus knew everything that would happen.

For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born. Mark 14:21 (ESV)

This verse balances a mystery many of us struggle to understand. The Bible tells us God is sovereign and in control of all things. Nothing happens by chance. God is large and in charge of everything. We have seen that so far in Jesus' betrayal. Jesus knew all things that were going to happen to him. Jesus knew Judas would betray him. He knew who would crucify him. He knew when they would do it. He knew all of this ahead of time. None of this was out of Jesus' control. Since God has so much control of the future, people often think God's sovereignty trumps their personal responsibility and their choices don't matter. That is not true. God's sovereignty and our responsibility are both true. This is held in perfect tension in this verse. While Judas' betrayal of Jesus was written about in the Bible long before it happened, Judas was still fully responsible for his choice to betray Jesus and the consequences that followed. Yes, God is large and in charge and nothing happens by surprise. Yes, we make real choices, and yes, we are responsible for them.

Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper

We will study Passover in depth next week. For now, know Passover has eight steps to it. Jesus will walk his disciples through those eight steps and teach

them how in the original Passover the lamb pointed to him. The original Passover lamb's was slain and its blood put on doorposts so the angel of death would pass over God's people and not touch them. Jesus is the true Passover lamb whose blood was slain and figuratively covers us so death passes over us. As part of working through the Passover, Jesus repurposed two of the eight steps of Passover to point to him.

And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." Mark 14:22 (ESV)

Step five of the Passover was the passing of the unleavened bread around the table. It was usually eaten in silence. It was known as the bread of affliction. Instead of silence, Jesus inserted words. He said, "This is my body. This is to remind you of my body."

Incidentally, nobody took it literally. Nobody thought they were literally eating Jesus' body. Everyone in the room was looking at Jesus. They were not literally eating Jesus. The Passover was a meal already filled with metaphors and symbolism. Jesus added to the symbolism of the Passover. The bread symbolized his body. Everyone knew Jesus was speaking metaphorically about his body, not literally.

And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many." Mark 14:23–24 (ESV)

We will study this next week. In the Passover, there were four cups that were drunk during the eight-step meal. This is most likely the third cup of the meal. While the bread was part of stage five of the Passover. The cup was at stage seven.

Nobody in the room thought the cup literally contained Jesus' blood. It was a metaphor of Jesus' blood which was about to be sacrificed to create an entirely new way for God's people to relate to him. The old covenant was based on our behavior. It was keeping God's laws. All that did was demonstrate everyone is a miserable failure because none of us can keep God's laws. We cannot behave our way into a right relationship with God. The new covenant that Jesus inaugurated in his blood is not based on our failing behavior. It is based on Jesus' perfect behavior. We trust in the perfect life Jesus lived, not in the failing life of sin we live. That is why Jesus came to give us this new covenant. He succeeded in making a way for us to be right with God because we fail when it comes to being made right with God.

In summary, Jesus repurposed the bread and the wine from stages five and seven of the Passover meal to point to his body and blood which were given to create a new way for us to relate to God, not based on our failing behavior but based on his perfect behavior.

Nobody in the room understood the bread and the juice as anything more than metaphorical. Nobody thought the bread was his actual flesh and the cup of wine was his actual blood. If they thought the cup was Jesus' actual blood, they would have never drunk it. The Jews were forbidden from drinking blood in the Old Testament, especially human blood!

History is filled with debates on this topic. The Catholic Church teaches something called transubstantiation. This is the belief that the bread and the cup

actually become the body and blood of Christ when they are administered by the priest. You literally eat Christ's flesh and drink his blood. They miss the metaphorical sense of Jesus' words. The Lutheran Church teaches something called consubstantiation. This is the belief that the bread and the cup stay the bread and the cup but like a sponge soaking up water, they soak up the spiritual presence of the body of Christ and the spiritual presence of the blood of Christ. We don't teach that. We don't believe that. We believe the bread and the cup are just bread and cup of wine. They were used by Jesus as metaphors representing the body and blood of Christ, just as the of the Passover was filled with metaphors.

Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God. Mark 14:25 (ESV)

Jesus knew this was the last meal he would have with his disciples. This was the last Passover he would celebrate with them. Nothing that was about to happen to Jesus surprised him or was out of his control. I love the fact that Jesus knew he would not go in the grave and stay in the grave. He knew he would rise to life and blow the doors of death wide open. Jesus knew the next time he would eat the Passover would be at the marriage supper of the lamb, with not just the disciples around the table but all of us around the table. It is talked about in Revelation 19.

The disciples will fail him. Peter will deny him.

And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Mark 14:26 (ESV)

Next week, when we take a deeper look at the Passover Jesus celebrated this night, we will see that in Passover, the Jews sang Psalms 113-118 during the meal. The last set of Psalms they sang were Psalm 115-118, which concluded the Passover meal. This means we likely know what Jesus sang with his disciples before they left for the Mount of Olives. When did this take place? It was before midnight. The Jews always finished Passover before midnight.



We know from John 13 that Jesus gave a piece of bread dipped in the fruit salsa to Judas during the meal. Jesus looked at Judas and said, “What you are going to do, do quickly.” Judas immediately left the room. The Gospel of John tells us that the disciples thought Jesus was probably telling Judas to give a gift to the poor from the money bag. We know that Jesus had already told Judas he knew of his plans to betray him. When Jesus told Judas to leave and do what he was to do quickly, it was Jesus telling Judas he could leave in order to betray him!

In spite of all the incredible love and kindness Jesus showed to Judas on this night, Judas left with every intention to betray Jesus.

Now we see that Jesus knew it was not just Judas that would betray him, but the rest of the disciples, his closest friends, would also fail him.

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.’” Mark 14:27 (ESV)

While Judas was working on premeditated murder, the betrayal of the rest of the disciples would be different. Jesus said they would all *fall away*. The Greek word is *scandalize*. It means to fall away under pressure of circumstances. It is not intentionally falling away but being pressured into falling away. That is what happened. When Jesus was arrested, all the disciples ran. When Jesus died, all of the apostles, except for John, were in hiding.

But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee. Mark 14:28 (ESV)

This is another part of Jesus reminding them that everything that would happen to him was part of God's plan. Nobody was taking his life from him. He was giving his life for them. Death would not conquer him. He would go into death and conquer death. Jesus just told them he would rise from the grave and have a reunion meeting with them in Galilee. This week, every time you put an appointment on your phone calendar, think of Jesus putting this appointment on the disciples' calendars to meet them in Galilee AFTER he rose from the dead.

Peter said to him, "Even though they all fall away, I will not." And Jesus said to him, "Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times." But he said emphatically, "If I must die with you, I will not deny you." And they all said the same. Mark 14:29–31 (ESV)

Judas, who was close to Jesus, had planned Jesus' murder, and it didn't take Jesus by surprise. All the other disciples would also betray Jesus under pressure. That didn't take Jesus by surprise. Here was overconfident Peter. He kept promising Jesus he would never fall away from him. He was willing to even die for him. Peter claimed he would be more committed to Jesus than the rest of

the disciples, but in reality he would fail Jesus even worse than the other disciples. Jesus knew all of this ahead of time.

“Peter, you won’t just fall away from me. You will deny even knowing me three times before morning. You will betray me miserably.”

What is this teaching us? There are a few things.

Applications

We will fail Jesus, but he will never fail us.

Every disciple failed Jesus miserably. Jesus knew Judas was a cold-blooded murderer, but he washed his feet, gave him the position of honor at the Last Supper, and treated him as a friend, even though he murdered him. Peter denied even knowing Jesus three times. All the rest of the disciples fell away from Jesus under pressure. Jesus knew everyone who would fail him, but he also knew he would not fail us. Nothing turned Jesus away from his mission to love us, to die for us, to pay for the very sin of the people who would fail him and betray him again and again. The betrayers were not just all the disciples but they are you and me.

Friends, I don’t know how many times you have failed Jesus or betrayed Jesus. I don’t know how many promises you have made to Jesus that you have broken and failed to keep. These verses tell us that even when we betray Jesus miserably, we have a Jesus who loves us and he will not betray us. He loved his disciples so much he died for them even though they failed him miserably. He loves us. He dies for us even though we fail him miserably. In America, we kill

people who betray our country. With Jesus, we have a God who dies for us when we betray him. That is the good news of the gospel.

When the world is falling apart around us, God is in complete control. He can even take sin and use it for his good purposes.

Another strong theme in these verses is that even when the world appears to be falling apart around Jesus, nothing took him by surprise, and he had everything under complete control. He even used the evil plans conceived against him as the very means by which he would love us and save us from sin.

If Jesus knew all the sin that would be done against him even before it happened, if he knew the sin of the disciples before it happened, that means he knows all about our sins, even before we commit them, and he still loves us. He still chose to die for us. What more can we ask for?

Amazingly, he took the sin done to him and used it to be the very way he saves us. He can take the sin done against us and accomplish good out of it for us and for his kingdom. He can even take the sin we have done and flip it on its head and use it for good in ways we wouldn't expect. That doesn't justify our sin or make an excuse for our sin, but it helps us realize that our God is so big he is even greater than sin. That is what gives us hope. Sin is not bigger than our God. Our God is bigger than our sin.

So these verses give us two strong lessons.

1. No matter how miserably we fail Jesus, he will never fail us. He loves us and he offers to forgive us. The disciples failed him miserably, but he died for them. We fail Jesus repeatedly and miserably, yet he died for us.

2. Our God is so large that even when it looks like life is out of control and falling apart around us, he has it under control, and he knows everything that is happening, just like Jesus did in his final week of life. God is so large, he can take the sin done to us and even the sin done by us and flip it on its head and use it for our good and the growth of God's kingdom.



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