

Mark 14:32-72: Prelude to Calvary

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[0 : 0 0] The scripture reading for today is from Mark chapter 14, verses 32 to 72, and can be found on page 827 of the Pew Bibles.

And you can remain seated today for today's reading. It's a rather long passage. Again, that's Mark chapter 14, 32 to 72.

And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, sit here while I pray. And he took with him Peter and James and John and began to be greatly distressed and troubled.

And he said to them, my soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch. And going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if it were possible, this hour might pass from him.

And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.

[1 : 0 8] And he came and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch this one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation.

The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer him.

And he came the third time and said to them, Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Is it enough? It is enough. The hour has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Rise, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand. And immediately while he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve.

And with him a crowd with swords and clubs from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, The one I kiss is the man. Seize him and lead him away under guard.

[2 : 1 2] And when he came, he went up to him at once and said, Rabbi! And he kissed him, and he laid hands on him and seized him.

But one of those who stood near drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. And Jesus said to them, Have you come out against a robber with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I was with you in the temple, teaching, and you did not seize me.

But let the scriptures be fulfilled. And they all left him and fled. And a young man followed him with nothing but a linen cloth about his body. And they seized him, but he left the linen cloth and ran away naked.

And they led Jesus to the high priest. And all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together. And Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priests.

And he was sitting with the guards and warming himself at the fire. Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they found none.

[3 : 18] For many bore false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree. And some stood up and bore false witness against him, saying, We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not with hands.

Yet even about this their testimony did not agree. And the priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?

But he remained silent and made no answer. Again the high priest asked him, Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am.

And you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven. And the high priest tore his garments and said, What further witness do we need?

You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision? And they all condemned him as deserving death. And some began to spit on him and to cover his face and to strike him, saying, Prophecy!

[4 : 26] And the guards received him with blows. And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, You also were with the Nazarene Jesus.

But he denied it, saying, I neither know nor understand what you mean. And he went out into the gateway and the rooster crowed. And the servant girls saw him and began to say again to the bystanders, This man is one of them.

But again he denied it. And after a little while, the bystander again said to Peter, Certainly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean. But he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, I do not know the man of whom you speak.

And immediately the rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.

And he broke down and wept. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Thank you, David.

[5 : 38] Good to be with you this afternoon. Excuse me just a moment. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, thank you so much for this worship service this afternoon with your people.

These that know you, love you, seek to serve you in this world. Praise you for this passage that's before us.

We pray, oh God, that it would speak clearly to us. Lord, that it would motivate us, inspire us, as well as inform us for the advance of your work in our own hearts and in this world.

We commend this time of preaching to you in Christ's name. Amen. Our Lenten journey on this afternoon has brought us to Palm Sunday.

First day in Passion Week and pray that where we have been in the series as well as where we will go in the week and on next week will help us both to see as well as to savor the things that are near and dear to our faith as the people of God.

[7 : 01] that Jesus often went there with his disciples and such was the case in our text today.

First place is Gethsemane. But also, as you look at these particular venues, each of them, not only is there a where, the place, but there is also the who that deals with the people that you see in those various venues.

Of course, Jesus is there, isn't he? Huh? With his disciples and we, as David has read the text that is before us, Jesus is greatly distressed.

And the word has the idea of being in a deep emotional disturbance. As we track with Jesus throughout the Gospels, that kind of demeanor is very foreign to him.

There was no one more in control than Jesus over all situations, and not that he wasn't in control here, but just that seems to be a very strange way to describe him.

[8 : 18] He is greatly distressed and troubled, and the idea behind there is that he is weighted down. He's weighted down.

This is a very significant period in time, and again, we don't see Jesus like this elsewhere in the Gospels.

But here he is. He's on the threshold of doing what he had come into the world to do. And the gravity of the situation was almost unbearable.

Now, think of some of the worst moments that you've had in your life. It may have been the death of a loved one. It may have been the loss of something else that was near and dear and valuable to you.

It may have been when you were told that you had a particular medical condition. Think about how you felt at that worst time, and then multiply it.

[9 : 28] Multiply it many times over, because here you have the sinless Son of God on the threshold of fulfilling his mission, and it was a very, very dark time.

Jesus was there in the garden, but so were his disciples. And if we would see the repeated word that describes them in verses 37 and 40 and 41, theirs was a sorrow induced kind of slumber.

They were found sleeping. They were found sleeping. Are you still sleeping? Verse 41. The master feeling the weight of the moment.

These men had been up a long time. It had been a long evening for them. Perhaps their master's sorrow and the lack of sleep, and they were feeling sleepy themselves, sleeping and sorrowing it together.

The moment was more than they could manage. Ever had those times of sorrow and depression and you wish that you could just go to sleep, wake up, and it's all a bad dream.

[10 : 58] As in getting a few winks would make everything go away. not so. It was not a bad dream. It was their reality and that's the way they faced it.

Judas the betrayer was there. We see that in verses 43-50. So not only the disciples, but also a disciple, of course, Judas, but he was in the process of betraying him.

So as you pan the garden and look and see who's there, Jesus, his disciples minus Judas, and then Judas enters into the picture.

He's there. We needn't say much about him. His mark in history and his reputation has already been made and is well known. A betrayer of innocent blood for 30 pieces of silver had led the authorities to Jesus.

comes to Gethsemane with a crowd in place to take Jesus into custody. Jesus faced with this betrayer, he remains calm.

[12 : 10] And in the midst of this commotion, he utters six simple but powerful words. Verse 49, but let the scripture be fulfilled.

Huh? In the midst of this trial, in the midst of betrayal, in the midst of abandonment, in the midst of coming face to face with his betrayer, let the scripture be fulfilled.

What scripture might he have in mind? Perhaps Isaiah 53 and 3, he was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows acquainted with grief, and as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised.

We did not esteem him. Or perhaps, and here's one that we don't often look at, perhaps it was Psalm 88 and 18 that says this, you have caused my beloved and my friend to shun me, my companions have become darkness.

And there were probably other scriptures that may have come to our Lord's mind, but six simple words let the scripture be fulfilled.

[13 : 28] After all, God is in control. And my situation is hard and as difficult as it may be does not mean that God is still not in control. Everything about that.

It's difficult. It's dark. It's dire. God still in control.

The place, Gethsemane, the people, Jesus and his followers, including Judas, a delegation from the Sanhedrin. But what about the problem?

We've already recognized it, but verse 50 sums it up quite succinctly. Look at verse 50. And they all left him and fled.

Sums it up. The shepherd had been smitten, and the sheep were being scattered. The garden Jesus had been abandoned and forsaken and betrayed.

[14 : 33] They forsook him and fled. Notice this strange two verses in verses 51 and 52. The disciples were not the only ones in the garden who had fled.

Here we have an unidentified young man believed by some to have been John Mark who had also followed Jesus.

Perhaps awakened by the commotion of what was going on. Perhaps it was and if it was John Mark his home was there in Jerusalem and the delegation may have first come there because it could have been there that Jesus was observing the Passover with his disciples on that evening but he was grabbed by the authorities but escaped into the night naked and clothed or barely clothed.

The placing of this incident caused some to believe that what we see in this young man is what the reader will eventually see in Peter.

He is embarrassed. He is shamed. You see that in the latter verses of the chapter here but some seem to think that this was Peter.

[15 : 57] At least it was a foreshadowing of what would happen with Peter who would be shamed by his own actions and found to be exposed.

But notice Jesus in the situation his posture restrained submissive and controlled a lamb that is being led to the slaughter.

Jesus in Gethsemane with his disciples prior to his arrest that's what we see here. He knows what's before him. He prays for relief but submits to the sovereign will of God.

He petitions his disciples for assistance but they are in no shape to pray. When we think of the defeat of the garden in the beginning of human history since it was before where Adam had succumbed to the tempter but here the second Adam in the garden keeps his bearings in the midst of it all.

Notice the different place that we come to in verse 53. It's the high priest residence. Look at verse 53 just let me read it. As a matter of fact in verses 53 and 54 Mark introduces what happens as it relates to what was happening in these two sections of the high priest courtyard.

[17 : 36] On the inside something was going on but on the outside also something in the courtyard was going on. Look how Mark introduces this particular section in verses 53 and 54.

And they led Jesus to the high priest and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together. But then Peter follows from a distance right into the courtyard of the high priest and he was sitting with the Sanhedrin in their court but then he shows you what happens to Peter in the courtyard.

That's what we see here. Court convening inside Peter found in the courtyard that's where he is. That's the place first place the garden second place the high priest residence what about the people those in active opposition to Jesus the number of people included and this seems what Mark does he shows you in the first venue he shows you a group the disciples and then he shows you an individual Judas here he does the same thing he shows you first of all a group the Sanhedrin and then he shows you an individual Peter both in this particular venue but notice this is interesting what we see here they were trying to find fault with Jesus they were seeking testimony in order to put Jesus to death in verse 55 look there now the chief priest and the whole council were seeking testimony against

Jesus to put him to death and they found none look at verse 56 for many bore false witness against him but their testimony did not agree and some stood up and bore false witness against him saying we heard him say I will destroy this temple that is made with hands and in three days I will build another!

not with hands verse 59 yet even about this their testimony did not agree witnesses said come forward but their testimonies did not agree that being the case there could be no conviction thus their tactics changed they sought to convict Jesus then on the basis of his own words notice as you follow along there and look at verse 60 the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus have you no answer to make what is it that these men testify against you notice Christ in verse 61 he remained silent Isaiah 53 and made no answer again the high priest asked him are you the Christ the son of the blessed or basically the son of God Jesus answer here to the high priest question was the basis for his own conviction this the charge that they raised against him or leveled against him was that of blasphemy in other words he was insulting the very honor of

[20 : 56] God in their minds at least by making himself equal to God and Jesus words themselves more than suggested that he was equal to God but they would have none!

What about our Lord's claims? When asked if he was the Messiah the Son of God the Blessed One he said yeah I am huh?

Jesus words agree with what we see in the first chapter of Mark Mark 1 and 1 the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God and the words of the Father in that same chapter chapter 1 verse 11 you are my beloved son with you well pleased huh?

But notice the words that we find in verse 62 you shall see the Son of man this favorite designation of Jesus seated at the right hand of power again another circumlocution for God himself and coming with the clouds of heaven another divine sign in the heavenlies in saying this affirming this Jesus equated himself with the divine figure of Daniel chapter 7 verse 13 and the Lord who would occupy the place of privilege and prominence and power yes he was God divine and so we have in view of that the high priest then tears his clothes this sign indicating something serious has been done here a gesture of horror and of sorrow huh this was the straw that broke the back huh they were reaching for

Jesus and trying to get him to say something and they got him in that regard but it was true what he was saying and thus Jesus sentenced of death by them huh and then we see finally this scene the one who was in the courtyard!

[23 : 07] huh Peter and while Jesus was being tried Peter was facing a trial you might say of his own Jesus had taken the courageous stand on the inside Peter had succumbed to denying Jesus on the outside Jesus was speaking truth before the authorities and here Peter refused to identify himself with Jesus even before this little servant!

Jesus in the face of death and before and Peter before harmless servant killed condemnation and denial the problems in this particular venue so we say well Pastor Jay why do we have this particular account in the book of Mark while Mark certainly gives his readers historical information about Jesus his purpose in doing so was more than just relating historical facts the gospels indeed are historical and they are theological and they are inspirational but they are also they had the purpose of discipleship in other words they went out to those who believed in Jesus and was to help them to see greater glimpses of him and to see who he was it was to help them to grow in their faith in him and there was a first century situational context along with challenges of being a follower of

Jesus in that day just like there are challenges in following our Lord in our day challenges that went along with standing up for and living for Jesus both in the first century as well as in the 21st century and looking at what we see here friends can serve to sober those of us who are followers of Jesus that we would distance ourselves from anything or or any act that distances ourselves from Jesus we need to think about that anything that would distance us from Jesus we need to distance ourselves from it anything that would cause Jesus shame we need to distance ourselves from it so what we see here is not just for information it's for our inspiration and for our motivation what we see here can help us to take a stand for the one who stood indeed for us it helps us to to do as the writer of the

Hebrew said in chapter 12 and verse 3 and this is what he said consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself so that you may not grow weary and faint hearted!

Consider Jesus in the face of trial so that you may be able to stand in the midst of trial and challenge what we find here in this particular passage this is a prelude as it were to Calvary there was desertion and rejection and abandonment and condemnation and denial the road to Calvary for Christ was not easy he had entered into this very dark tunnel and there was no turning around every step that he took was more dark and more dire yet Jesus faced Calvary head on encountering the very sources of opposition and here's what we see in the text before us though forsaken by his followers and condemned by his enemies Jesus was faithful to fulfill his mission forsaken by his followers condemned by his enemies the prelude to

[27 : 14] Calvary in this regard is that he was faithful to fulfill his mission but I want you to see something else in this particular passage as relates to what our Lord did in this prelude to Calvary one of the things that we will need to embrace and this is in the first part you will see it in chapter verse 32 and following we see that for our Lord the prelude to Calvary was agonizing prayer in Gethsemane anxiety was met with prayer this was a prelude to it for him and I would ask you on this afternoon how do you face your tough places in life things that may cause you anxiety and angst and grief and sorrow things that you would not rather face things that you and I would eliminate if we had that option

Jesus faced Calvary with agonizing heartfelt prayer Luke don't you love his description he prayed to the point of sweat as drops of blood falling from his brow agonizing prayer and I love the way that Jesus prayed because he prayed the way he taught us to pray first of all in addressing him Abba father and then he prayed not my will but your will be done your kingdom come your will be done on earth oh I think friends that sometimes we so undervalue prayer and its power and its potential but agonizing prayer was a prelude to Calvary for Jesus but notice what else you see that in this incident with his disciples honesty in community Jesus did not go to

Calvary alone and if we follow Jesus we face we should find ourselves when we find our face facing difficult circumstances we should do so prayerfully in community that's what he did he took his disciples and then he took Peter James and John with him and he asked them hey pray with me in this particular incident honesty in community one of the great things that we have enjoyed in our community group this year is to being able to go to the next level in our depth of sharing with one another deep personal kinds of things aches and prayers huh and such is the place not only have we been able to share our needs but we've had also the opportunity to pray with and for one another and I trust that perhaps in your community group or with some other believers that you're finding prayer support and other support in your times of need huh

Jesus a prelude to Jesus to Calvary for Jesus was agonizing prayer but it was also honesty in the midst of community but there's another thing and I want you to see that this does not replace agonizing prayer but the next thing is belief in sovereignty in scripture huh let the scripture be fulfilled this does not replace prayer agonizing prayer but it goes along with it so yes our talking to God has value and even agonizing in prayer before him has value but also belief in the sovereignty of God that he ultimately is in control but also in scripture that scripture will be fulfilled huh things in the garden and in the high priest home were bad but the Lord was in control and was working all things out in a card with biblical truth let the scripture be fulfilled friends and he does the same thing today the presence of trouble in your life and in my life must not be equated with the very absence of God as a matter of fact could mean the presence of trouble you remember

Psalms 46 and 1 God is our refuge and strength what is he he is a very what present help even in the midst of trouble agonizing prayer yes but belief in the sovereignty of God that he's going to fulfill scripture in its time consideration friends of these things will help us to take a stand for the one who stood up for us prelude to Calvary for Jesus and also some points that you and I need to hear as his followers in this world let me point out that the horror that Jesus faced in much of this chapter contrasts with something else that we see in the chapter let me invite you look at the first part of chapter 14 a contrast with the honor that was bestowed on Jesus at the beginning of the chapter in verses 3 through 9 you got all of these horrible kinds of things but another prelude to Calvary for Jesus was this great gift that was bestowed on him by this woman thought to be

[33 : 13] Mary of Bethany where she comes and she pours out this expensive perfume this expensive ointment on the one who would pour out his life for all of us her honor contrasted with the shame of Peter and others and this let me allow me to read it look at verse 3 and while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper as he was reclining at table a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard very costly and she broke the flask and poured it over his head there were some who had said to themselves indignantly why was this why was the ointment wasted like that for this ointment could have been sold for more than 300 denarii and given to the poor they scolded her look at Jesus in contrast to them but Jesus said leave her alone why do you trouble her she has done a beautiful thing to me it was beautiful it was timely it was priceless son for you always had the poor with you and whenever you want you can do good for them but you will not always have me but she has done what she could she has anointed my body beforehand for the burial look at how

God in this wonderful and marvelous way even before facing all of these naysayers prepares our Lord in this wonderful and beautiful kind of way and truly I say to you wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world what she has done will be told in memory of her as a memorial for her her costly act of self-sacrifice was preparatory for our Lord's death and burial and in ways it previewed Jesus supreme act of selfless sacrifice hers was an extravagant kind of love the love of Jesus would even be more so an act of honor as a prelude to Calvary as Jesus faced the horror that was before him and then guess what we have also in this chapter and I say this in preparation as we come to the Lord's table and it's all here even before

Calvary even before these horrors in the garden and in the residence of the high priest Jesus initiates a ceremony that replaced the Passover of the Old Testament where he really in essence likened himself he was indeed the Passover lamb and he instituted a ceremony that reflect the giving of himself the breaking the giving of his body and of his blood and I read these as we prepare for communion on today prepare your hearts for this meal and this is a meal that preaches within itself it preaches through its symbols it preaches through the bread that has been broken here in the trays it pictures his blood that was given in death partaking of them speaks of our union with Christ in his death and his resurrection it's one of the ways that we witness to our relationship to him but I also encourage you to come on today and be strengthened be strengthened as you go back into this world and whatever it may be that you are facing whatever challenge be strengthened in it be strengthened through Christ minimal nutritional value but great spiritual value for you and me may you be strengthened in your faith as you come again and see and behold what Christ has done for you for he is indeed the bread of life we are fed and nourished and we have life through him may the

Lord strengthen each of us to take our stand for the one who stood up for us he stood up for us in the face of abandonment and rejection and condemnation and denial let me read the words you see them on the page in Mark chapter 14 verses 22 through 25 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 drank all 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 prelude to Calvary the institution of this meal that would represent what he did on Calvary for you and for me and so we come we come in Lenten season we come facing Calvary we come as people who need inspiration and motivation of what we see while we embrace it's the information and the theological content that speaks of Christ being God son of man son of God all of those things but we come as his disciples well and far but we go back into the world facing those who may challenge us in situations in life may you strengthen as you go into the world this week let me pray and then we're going to come to the table heavenly father we give thanks on this afternoon for your marvelous matchless grace and Lord

[40 : 20] Jesus we thank you for the resolve in which you faced calvary praise you for being faithful to your mission not in any way deterred may we follow in your footsteps but we praise you for these glimpses of how you faced it with agonizing prayer and in the midst of community not alone even though the disciples failed Lord you did your part in the invitation and then recognize in belief in sovereignty and in scripture may we go with that those same kinds of resolve to our world may we stand for you one who has stood for us we pray in Christ's name amen