

MARK 14:27-52

SUNDAY 29th MARCH



BIBLE

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Ask God for help for yourself and the church as we read His word
Read Mark 14:27-52

REFLECTION

FROM OWEN GOODSPEED

Have you ever had the experience of being let down by someone who didn't do what they said they would? Or perhaps you have been the one to let somebody down?

All of us have probably forgotten something we promised to do, or made a promise with all good intentions, perhaps even felt strongly that we definitely would do whatever it was, but then in the end and for whatever reason we didn't do what we had promised.

Now I know that not all people are honest or well meaning but for those who are, even the very best of us, the problem, Jesus says, is that "The spirit is willing but the body is weak." vs 38

The Lord Jesus had just celebrated the Passover with His disciples and the first Communion. He knew that His earthly ministry was coming to a climax and He was about to face His greatest ordeal.

Who wouldn't want their closest friends around them at such a time? So we see that Jesus is with the inner circle of His disciples, Peter, James and John, the same three who He had taken up the mountain when He was transfigured before them.

But we see the weakness of even these three closest friends. When Jesus tells His followers that they will all fall away Peter is very quick to declare otherwise even when Jesus corrects him (v30) and states that he would die rather than disown Jesus.

All the others said the same (v 31) But when Jesus was arrested they all deserted Him and fled (v50) and Peter did disown Jesus just as Jesus said he would Mark 14:66-72 (Peter at least was brave enough to have tried to fight for Jesus (vs 47, see also John 18:10) and to have followed into the courtyard where the Sanhedrin met)

I note in passing that although Mark records repeatedly that Jesus told His disciples what would happen to Him, that He would rise again, (8:31, 9:31-32 & 10:33-34) Peter and the others seemingly fail to grasp Jesus' promise to meet Him in Galilee after He had risen (14:28). Indeed it wasn't until He met with them after the resurrection that they finally believed Him.

How very disappointing!

But we shouldn't kid ourselves that we could have done better; we couldn't.

When the Lord Jesus was agonising over what was going to happen to Him and wrestling in prayer (v 32-41) He asked Peter, James and John to keep watch (v 34) and to pray (v 38) Three times He found them sleeping! (v 37, 40 & 41) But the Lord Jesus was totally faithful. Despite knowing exactly what was going to happen to Him (see e.g. 8:31), His prayer was "Abba Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

So what can we take away from this passage for our help and encouragement?

1. Nothing can take God by surprise. Jesus knew what was going to happen. God has not been surprised by Covid 19 or anything else that may be going on in our lives. Neither is He ever surprised by any of our failures. Jesus went to the Cross to die for us knowing full well that we would fail Him. It was God's plan for our rescue, reinstatement and forgiveness just as it was for Peter, James and John.

2. The words of Scripture always come true, as they did in this passage. We can therefore fully rely upon the promises in God's Word including these verses:

“After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.” Isaiah 53:1

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

3. The Lord Jesus is totally reliable in a way that we could never be. When He faced the ultimate unspeakably painful ordeal for both body and mind through His death on the Cross. He remained faithful to His Father's will. If He overcame that obstacle then we can be sure that nothing else will deflect Him from His declared purpose of saving sinners like us (Luke 19:10).

My prayer for all of you is that you stay healthy and well, but whatever may happen over the coming weeks, even if some of us should die (we all must one day), for those who are trusting in the Lord Jesus our future is assured in a place where there will be no death or mourning or crying or pain. (Revelation 21:4)

I pray the more therefore that we may all stand firm, rooted and confident in our shared faith in Christ.

Praise the Lord!!

REFLECTION

QUESTIONS AND NOTES

- When facing something difficult or dangerous what are the different ways we can react to them?
- Read 14:27-31
- Jesus predicts that the disciples will fall away and Peter will deny him. How does Jesus know?
 - How do the disciples react to being told this? Why do you think they react this way?
- Read 14:32-42
- What are the disciples asked to do? What do they do? Why?
- V36 gives a summary of Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane. He fervently wishes to avoid "The Hour" (v35) and "this cup" (v36). In v23 and 24 Jesus has explained that the cup of the passover represents his own blood, "poured out for many". His death will save people, just as the death of the passover lamb saved many. But also, in the old testament, a 'cup, was used as a picture of God's anger and judgement on wickedness (eg Isa 51:17-22). Now we see that Jesus, in His death, will suffer the anger and judgement of God on sin.*
- Why is it right that God is angry?
 - How does Jesus feel as he approaches the hour when He will experience God's anger and judgement?
 - Facing great difficulty Jesus prays. What is the upshot of His prayer in v36?
 - Jesus seeks relief but what is his greatest desire?
- Read 14:43-52
- How did the disciples respond to opposition? (v47-52)
 - How does Jesus respond to the arrest? (v48-50)
- Summarise and Apply
- What in this passage leads us to worship Jesus?
 - What do we learn from how the disciples face difficulty. What does that teach us about ourselves? How does it lead us to give thanks or repent?
 - How does this passage cause us to reflect on when we face difficulty?
 - How might this help us share the good news with our friends and neighbours who don't know Jesus?

PRAYER

RESPOND TO GOD IN PRAISE AND PLEADING

Use the Lord's prayer to help you structure your prayers. Pray in response to the passage, for yourself, the church and others.

*Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.*