

Betrayed and Abandoned

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Date: 14 May 2023

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[0 : 00] You may be seated. Good morning. My name's Matthew Capone, and I'm a pastor here at Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church, and it's my joy to bring God's Word to you this morning.

A special welcome if you're new or visiting. We're glad that you're here. And we're glad that you're here not because we're trying to fill seats, but because we're following Jesus together as one community.

And as we follow Jesus together, we've become convinced that there's no one so good. They don't need God's grace, and no one so bad that they can't have it, which is why we come back week after week to hear what God has to say to us in His Word.

We're continuing our series in the Gospel of Mark. You'll remember that the Gospels tell the story of Jesus and His life and His death and His resurrection. And as I mentioned earlier this morning and last week, the Gospels are always especially timely, and they're especially timely because of our constant need to have Christ presented to us in all His beauty.

And Jesus is always beautiful, but He's especially beautiful as we see Him in the days leading up to His death and resurrection.

[1 : 19] And so we're going to have the same goal in a sense that we had last week, which is to see Jesus clearly, to see Him in His beauty, in His glory, in His love, in His final hours before His death.

And so that's what we're going to see in Mark chapter 14. We're going to be starting at verse 43, and Jesus is going to continue His path to the cross, and we'll see a progression here, not simply His prayer last week, the foretelling of His denial, but here we're going to see Him both betrayed and abandoned.

We're going to see Him betrayed and abandoned, and it's with that I invite you to turn with me to God's Word. You can turn in your Bible. You can turn on your phone. You can turn in your worship guide.

No matter where you turn, remember that this is God's Word, and God tells us that His Word is more precious than gold, even the finest gold, and it's sweeter than honey, even honey that comes straight from the honeycomb.

And so that's why we read now Mark chapter 14, starting at verse 43. 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.

[2 : 38] Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, The one I will kiss is the man. Seize him and lead him away under guard.

And when he came, he went up to him at once and said, Rabbi, and he kissed him. Verse 46. And they laid hands on him and seized him.

But one of those who stood by 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 as 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. Verse 50.

And they all left him and fled. And a young man followed him with nothing but a linen cloth around his body. And they seized him.

[3 : 39] But he left the linen cloth and ran away naked. I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's Word. Our Father in heaven, we thank you again as we do every week that you have given us your Word as a gift, that you don't stand far away from us.

You're not distant. But instead, you come close and you speak to us. You tell us the story we need to hear. The story about ourselves and our sin and the story of Jesus and his grace and his love and his sacrifice.

And we ask that you would tell us that story again this morning, that you would show us what's profound in this narrative that's simple, that you would make it sweet and real to us, that you would use it as an instrument to grow our understanding and our vision of Jesus and his beauty, and that that would cause us to love him, to follow him, and to obey him.

And we thank you that we don't need to worry this morning about whether we've earned or deserved these things, that we ask you because we know that we haven't. And instead, we simply ask them in the mighty name of Jesus Christ.

Amen. Last week, we ended with Jesus' session of prayer, asking that the cup be taken away from him.

[5 : 08] And as I mentioned, he had this surprisingly quick answer. He did not have to wait long to understand whether he was going to be able to avoid the cross because we saw at the very end of last week's passage, verses 41 and 42, that the soldiers are immediately coming for Jesus.

Now, I told you last week, as I tell you from time to time, that I don't simply want you to learn things about the Bible, but I actually want you to learn how to read the Bible. You know, the old saying that you can give someone a fish and they'll eat for a day.

You can teach them to fish and they'll be able to eat for a lifetime. That's my hope for you. And so I'll remind you of the same thing I told you last week, that when we're reading the Bible, we want to look for things that are repeated.

We want to look for patterns and contrasts. We saw that last week, and we are not disappointed this week because the same thing repeats itself. Now, I'll pull back first to our passage that we looked at before.

Verses 41 and 42 have the repetition that we want. Verse 41, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Verse 42, see my betrayer is at hand.

[6 : 24] That does not stop though. We see it also in this passage this week. Verse 43, we see, excuse me, not verse 43, but verse 44, the same thing is repeated.

Now the betrayer had given them a sign. Mark means to underscore for us over and over again, in case we miss it, Jesus is being betrayed.

Okay? That's why this is over and over that he was underscoring it for us. In fact, he has given us hints at the very beginning of chapter 14, which we looked at several weeks ago.

We see the same thing. Verse 10, Judas Iscariot went to the chief priest in order to betray him.

Verse 11, he sought an opportunity to betray him. Verse 18, Jesus says, truly I say to you, one of you will betray me.

Verse 21, woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. Mark is repeating this over and over because he doesn't want us to miss the seriousness of what is happening here.

[7 : 34] And it is not simply any type of betrayal. It is not a small betrayal, but a large one. That's why we're told in verse 43, Judas came one of the 12.

Now, this is not news to us, right? We have known Judas for quite some time now. We have seen him over multiple chapters.

We don't need to be told that Judas is one of the 12. That's not a surprise. That's not new information for us. In fact, we were told that earlier in this same chapter.

Mark chapter 14, if you have your Bible and you look at verse 10, it says this, then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the 12. Why does Mark need to tell us what we already know?

Mark tells us what we already know to help us see how serious a betrayal this is. It is not that Jesus is merely betrayed by someone who happened to follow him and listen to his teaching.

[8 : 44] He's not betrayed by someone who's on the periphery, on the outside. No, he's betrayed by someone in the inner circle. This is an insider threat.

This is not just any betrayal. This is one of the worst betrayals. The principle is simple, which is this, the closer the person, the deeper the wound.

The closer the person, the deeper the wound. The only thing that could make this worse would be if it was one of the three, if it was Peter, James, or John.

But one of the 12 is bad enough. Jesus is not simply betrayed. He is betrayed by one of his closest friends.

Jesus is betrayed, we're told, not once, but twice, by one of the 12. We're not just told about Jesus' betrayal, though.

[9 : 50] It is shown as well. You'll remember when Judas comes, he has a sign that he's arranged. Verse 44, the one I will kiss is the man. Verse 45, and when he came, he went up to him at once and said, Rabbi, and he kissed him.

What is betrayal if not someone who uses your closeness, your trust in them to hurt you? And what shows closeness and trust more than a kiss?

One man has said this, betrayal is a gift that only a friend can give.

Betrayal is a gift that only a friend can give. Only a friend kisses you. only an insider knows enough to commit treason.

And so I just want us to sit in that for a second and to feel the pain and the heartbreak of it. Mark means for us to feel the pain and the heartbreak of it, which is why he says betray over and over again.

[11 : 18] He wants us to feel the pain and the heartbreak of it, which is why he tells us not once but twice that Judas was one of the twelve. What we are looking at in this week leading up to Jesus' death are things that are simple and profound in their simplicity.

I'm not here this morning to give you some sort of new or penetrating insight. I'm here to say simply look and see Jesus as he suffers.

Look and see Jesus in his pain. Look and see Jesus in what he was willing to go through for you.

Many of you perhaps have experienced betrayal. It's what the psalmist talks about in Psalm 88 which Brit read for us earlier. My closest friends have abandoned me.

And what is this if not Jesus' closest friends abandoning him? There's a neuroscientist named Matthew Lieberman who wrote a book named Social and he says that social pain, social rejection, we could put a heartbreak into that category is physically painful.

[12 : 42] He compares it to a broken leg and he says, look, if you take a brain scan, physical pain and social pain look the same. Just based on the scan, you're not going to be able to tell if someone is in physical pain or in emotional pain because they feel the same.

That is what rejection is like. imagine how much more it hurts to be betrayed. Now the point for us is not that we would feel sorry for Jesus.

Okay? There are some portions of the church that encourage us to sort of whip up compassion for Jesus that somehow we are supposed to feel bad for him but that's not the direction that the Bible points us in.

When Scripture shows us Jesus' suffering, when it highlights it, it is for two reasons. First, to show us how terrible our sin is.

The seriousness of the cure shows how terrible the disease is. And so as we look at Jesus, as we meditate on him, as we think about him, as we sit in his suffering for a minute, we are meant to be reminded that our sin is not a small thing but a great thing.

[14 : 07] It's not a little thing but a big thing. So great that it includes Jesus' betrayal here. Second, it shows us not just the greatness of our sin but even more than that, the greatness of God's love.

And so we sit in these things so that we can understand how serious our offense against God is and we can comprehend his love.

That is why we pause for a moment to look at Jesus' suffering. It's in understanding his suffering and seeing our sin that we're able to really savor and appreciate and understand how much Jesus loves us.

he loves us so much that he was separated from the Father. He drank the cup of wrath that we talked about last week. This week is just another angle on the same thing.

He loved us so much he underwent betrayal. That is how much Jesus suffered. that's how much he cares for you.

[15 : 28] Simple and profound. It's not simply though that Jesus is betrayed in this passage. The passion narrative also underscores for us that Jesus does this alone.

It would be one thing if Judas betrayed him, he gave him the kiss, he used this sign of intimacy to commit treason, but it is even more than that.

It is not just that Judas betrays him, it is that everyone else runs. Jesus is not just betrayed, he is abandoned.

Now it doesn't start with abandonment. We see in verse 47 before that, one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear.

Now other gospels go into more detail. They tell us that it was Peter, that the name of this high priest was the servant, was Malchus, and they also tell us that Jesus heals the ear there on the spot.

[16:31] Mark shares none of those things with us, which means that in Mark's mind those details are unimportant to the story he's trying to tell in this moment. And the story I believe is this, as Jesus is undergoing this moment of betrayal, as he is being kissed as an act of treason, his disciples are still deeply confused about what is going on.

They are forgetting what he has tried to tell them over and over again. Even after all the time they've spent with Jesus, they do not understand what is happening.

And so, Jesus is going through this moment of betrayal, and he is surrounded by misunderstanding, violence, commotion, and distraction. Those who are there to support him have no idea what's happening, and they do not what is helpful, but what is unhelpful.

Mark then quickly moves from confusion to abandonment. It's not just, verse 47, the loss of the ear. Jesus then rebukes them, verses 48, 49, and then verse 50 leaves us with this simple statement, and they all left him and fled.

Jesus' disciples are not merely confused. They also leave him. Jesus does not face the worst moments of his life on earth surrounded by his buddies who can encourage him.

[18:17] Jesus faces them completely alone. Even worse than that, it's not just that the disciples leave him. There is one young man, verse 51, who follows after Jesus in this situation, but he is quickly neutralized as well.

He has this linen cloth, which commentators tell us means he's probably wealthy, and most believe this is actually Mark himself. He is inserting himself into his own gospel.

He, as a young man, is chasing after Jesus, but what happens to him? Verse 52, he left the linen cloth and ran away naked.

This is on page 7 of your worship guide. Some scholars say that this is the author Mark himself, who would have been a young man at the time. If so, he's saying, I was there, and I was as bad as everybody else.

Everyone has failed Jesus. Everyone has failed Jesus.

[19:32] Even Mark can't get it done. And so the point is this. In a scene characterized by human failure, betrayal, and abandonment, Jesus succeeds.

But he does it all alone. Jesus does it by himself. were confronted with human incompetence and Jesus' great faithfulness.

Jesus is not a quarterback who's guarded and protected. Jesus is not a musician who has backup singers to support him.

Jesus is not a politician surrounded by aides and body guards. No, Jesus is all alone. No king ever moved forward so deserted and so abandoned.

No king except Jesus. Mark tells us this to remind us of a very simple truth.

[20:58] there is no pride. There is no self congratulation in following after Jesus.

Everyone has failed him. There is nothing for us to pat ourselves on the back for if we're Christians. Only gratitude, thankfulness, humility, repentance. repentance. Because everyone has failed Jesus. That includes you. It includes me. When it comes to our salvation, Mark is making it crystal clear for us that we do not give.

We only receive. God will have mentioned to you before that we often like to separate the world into three types of people.

[21:59] There are amazing people like Mother Teresa. There are terrible people like Hitler. And then there are just everyday good upstanding citizens.

Good great people like you and me. Mark is telling us forget that. You don't need to be a betrayer to be a bad person.

You don't need to be Judas. Even the disciples abandoned Jesus. Even the good people, even the upstanding law abiding citizens fled.

everyone failed Jesus. Not even the good people can contribute or help. Not even the good people are good.

Everyone needs saving. You can reject Jesus or you can follow Jesus. You cannot contribute anything to Jesus.

[23 : 15] You can give him nothing. You can only receive. When Jesus was here in this garden, he was abandoned by everyone.

Page eight of your worship guide points out that there was another garden that this garden echoes. In the garden of Eden, Adam and Eve woefully failed.

Here in this garden, Jesus succeeds. Where others dropped away, Jesus continues. Where others disobeyed, Jesus remained faithful.

Jesus passes where we failed. Jesus succeeds where we faltered. And he does it all alone because we've abandoned him.

And he does it all out of his love. That's how great our sin is, how much greater God's love.

[24 : 35] I've told you over and over in the gospel of Mark that need is the price of admission. Mark reminds us here, need is not just the price of admission, need is all you have.

You don't have to be a betrayer to abandon Jesus. And so the question of this passage is very, very simple.

will you recognize your need? And will you bring that need and only that need to Jesus?

Because in the end, all of us have failed him. When Jesus suffered, he did it all alone.

Need is the price of admission. And so that's what we're going to sing now in our closing hymn.

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul, to bear the dreadful curse for my soul.

[25 : 57] Let's pray. our Father in heaven, we praise you and thank you that Jesus' success is greater than our failure.

That as we abandon him, he doesn't abandon us. As we are faithless, he is faithful. We ask that you would use that truth to strip us of our pride and to cause us to run to you knowing that we bring our need and that need is all we have.

We ask these things in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen. I invite you to stand for our closing hymn.