

# **Life-Sharing Encountering Jesus**

**Lesson 1 “Be Careful What You See” Mark 14:1-11**

**Lesson 2 “ Tough Words From Jesus ” Luke 14:17-31**

**Lesson 3 “Hard Answers To Prayers” Mark 14:32-42**

**Choosing To Grow In The Knowledge Of God’s Word &  
The Lives Of God’s People.**

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## Life-Sharing & Pioneers Lesson 1 “Be Careful What You See” Mark 14:1-11

1. If you knew you only had a week left to live, what would you want to make sure that you got done?

*I'd want to make sure I had told my wife about our finances and what to do with the bills, and I'd want to have told the church all that it needed to know about what I do that people do not see or know how to do.*

### Jesus Anointed at Bethany Luke 14:1-11

**14** Now the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some sly way to arrest Jesus and kill him. <sup>2</sup> “But not during the festival,” they said, “or the people may riot.”

<sup>3</sup> While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. <sup>4</sup> Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, “Why this waste of perfume? <sup>5</sup> It could have been sold for more than a year’s wages<sup>[a]</sup> and the money given to the poor.” And they rebuked her harshly.

<sup>6</sup> “Leave her alone,” said Jesus. “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. <sup>7</sup> The poor you will always have with you,<sup>[b]</sup> and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. <sup>8</sup> She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. <sup>9</sup> Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

<sup>10</sup> Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them.

<sup>11</sup> They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

### COMMENTARY

The religious leaders could not stand it any longer. They wanted to get rid of Jesus, so they began to hatch a plan to accomplish their goal. Timing was critical. Now the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were only two days away. The Passover was the annual Jewish festival or feast celebrating the time when the angel of the Lord passed over the homes of the Hebrews on the night when all the firstborn of the Egyptians died ([Exod. 12:13,23,27](#)). A lamb was to be sacrificed and eaten to commemorate this event. These lambs had to be slain on the fourteenth of Nissan (March/ April), and the meal was to be eaten that evening between sundown and midnight. According to Jewish time, that would be the fifteenth of Nissan, since the Jewish day began at sundown.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread followed this Passover meal, and it lasted for seven days ([Exod. 12:15-20](#); [23:15](#); [34:18](#); [Deut. 16:1-8](#)). The Last Supper was probably the celebration of the Passover, and it took place on a Thursday night. The decision to do away with Jesus probably began the night before the Passover celebration, a Wednesday.

The religious leaders realized there would be thousands of people in Jerusalem from all over the world to attend this time of celebration. They knew it would be risky to go after Jesus during this time: or the people may riot. The crowd would be highly excitable during this time, and they could not be sure of controlling and persuading the people to be on their side. So the religious leaders decided to wait until the feast was over. Yet, God had other plans; and this part of their plan did not work out. [Verse 11](#) indicates that the religious leaders gained some unexpected help from one of Jesus' own friends, Judas. This may have convinced them to move ahead with their plan during the celebration of the Passover.

[14:3](#). Between the accounts of the plan to arrest Jesus, Mark contrasts the betrayal and treachery of Judas and the religious leaders with the love and devotion of Mary. The Gospels of Mark and Matthew do not report this woman's name, but the Gospel of John tells us it was Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus ([John 11:1-2](#)). Mary is mentioned three times in the Gospels; each time she is at the feet of Jesus ([Luke 10:38-42](#); [John 11:31-32](#); [12:1-8](#)). Mary loved Jesus.

Mary was at the home of Simon the Leper in the village of Bethany. Simon may have been healed by Jesus. Perhaps they were celebrating his healing. The expensive perfume, made of pure nard came from the root of a plant that grew chiefly in India. Mary broke the neck of the white jar and began to pour this sweet-smelling perfume over Jesus' head.

[14:4-5](#). The phrase, some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, seems to describe the disciples ([Matt. 26:8](#)). Yet, Judas, who was the treasurer for the disciples, may have been the most vocal ([John 12:4-5](#)). His value system, as we shall see later, centered on money. The more he had, the happier he was, since he served as the group's treasurer.

The phrase, it could have been sold for a year's wages, shows the incredible extravagance of this sacrifice by Mary. The critics of Mary's extravagant expression said the perfume could have been sold and the money given to the poor. Giving gifts to the poor on the eve of Passover was customary for the Jews. More importantly, it shows the insensitivity of the disciples in comparison to the great love Mary had for Jesus. Mary shows that Jesus deserves our best. The more we love Jesus, the more we will show it by what we offer to him.

[14:6-9](#). Jesus defended Mary's actions by saying, Leave her alone. . . Why are you bothering her? . . . She has done a beautiful thing to me. Jesus received Mary's gift for what it was—an unselfish act of love and devotion. Jesus pointed out to Mary's critics that he would not be with them much longer. In this context,

Mary's expressing of affection toward him was quite appropriate. The opportunity to help the poor would always exist. Jesus cared for the poor. This is evident in such passages as [Matthew 5:3; 6:2-4; Luke 6:20,36-38; 21:1-4](#). Yet, this was a very special occasion. It is so important for us to give flowers to those whom we love while they can appreciate them.

The phrase, she poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial, was a reminder of Jesus to his followers about his upcoming crucifixion and burial. The motivation for Mary's act was love and devotion. But Jesus interpreted her act of sacrifice as a fitting preparation for his death and burial.

[14:10-11](#). In the midst of such an expression of love by Mary, there was great hatred and jealousy by another follower of Jesus—Judas. Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. Judas was on the "inside" with Jesus. He traveled with him and was one of his chosen disciples. Yet, Judas's action shows that just to know a lot about Jesus does not save a person. There must be a response of faith and love.

The religious leaders were delighted to hear this. They now had an "inside man" who could pick the right time to hand Jesus over to them. Now they could avoid a riot by the people during the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread. They sealed the deal by giving Judas what he loved most—money. [Matthew 26:15](#) spells out the amount—thirty silver coins. This also was the fulfillment of a prophecy about the Messiah in [Zechariah 11:12-13](#). Judas did not know it, but he was fulfilling Scripture by his act of betrayal.

Holman New Testament Commentary - Holman New Testament Commentary – Mark.

## COMMENTARY II

Mark's account of the final acts in Jesus' ministry begins with a simple summary of the scene. It was almost Passover. Jesus' enemies were looking for a way to kill him. Their concern about timing had to do with keeping control of the people. They wanted to kill Jesus without anyone noticing. But God had a different purpose in the timing of events.

[14:1](#) Now the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some sly way to arrest Jesus and kill him.<sup>NIV</sup> The *Passover* commemorated the night the Israelites were freed from Egypt ([Exodus 12](#)), when God "passed over" homes marked by the blood of a lamb. This was the last great plague on Egypt; in the unmarked homes the firstborn sons died. After this horrible disaster, Pharaoh let the Israelites go.

The day of Passover was followed by a seven-day festival called the *Feast of Unleavened Bread*. This, too, recalled the Israelites' quick escape from Egypt when, because they wouldn't have time to let their bread rise, they baked it

without leaven (yeast). This holiday found people gathering for a special meal that included lamb, wine, bitter herbs, and unleavened bread. Eventually the eight days (the day of Passover and the week of the Feast of Unleavened Bread) came to be called the Passover Feast. Passover was celebrated on the fourteenth day of the Jewish month of Nisan (by our calendar, the last part of March and the first part of April).

All Jewish males over the age of twelve were required to go to Jerusalem for Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread ([Deuteronomy 16:5-6](#)). For these feasts, Jews from all over the Roman Empire would converge on Jerusalem to celebrate a very important event in their history. For this holiday, Jerusalem, a town of about 50,000, swelled to 250,000 people.

The Jewish leaders (*chief priests and the teachers of the law*) plotted secretly to kill Jesus. They had already decided that Jesus must die (see [John 11:47-53](#)); they just needed the opportunity.

[14:2](#) "But not during the Feast," they said, "or the people may riot."<sup>NIV</sup> The leaders were afraid of Jesus' popularity, so they needed "some sly way" ([14:1](#)) to arrest Jesus and convict him with the death penalty. They did not want to attempt to arrest Jesus during the Passover because they feared that the crowd would riot on his behalf. They feared that such an uprising might bring the wrath of Rome. While Roman reprisals for riots in its territories were not as automatic as some have thought (politics in Rome at this time favored a moderating position), it was a possibility. The religious leaders did not want to take that chance. They probably planned to arrest him after the festival when the vast crowds were gone. However, Judas's unexpected offer ([14:10-11](#)) moved up their timetable.

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### **LIFE APPLICATION**

#### **WHO'S IN CONTROL?**

Most Jews in Jerusalem were preparing to observe Passover, a time of solemn remembrance, but also a time for families to celebrate. But some of the religious leaders had more important things to accomplish. Jesus had disrupted their security, revealed their sham, and opposed their authority. Now they would put him away. But the world is controlled by our all-wise God, not puny politicians. God would turn the religious leaders' murder plot into the greatest blessing that mankind would ever know. When grief or disaster seem to be dominating, remember that your life is in God's hands and remember what Jesus did for you.

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## **A WOMAN ANOINTS JESUS WITH EXPENSIVE PERFUME / [14:3-9](#) / [182](#)**

Matthew and Mark put this event just before the Last Supper, while John included it just before the Triumphal Entry. Of the three, John placed this event in the most likely chronological position. Mark sandwiched this beautiful event between two sections dealing with the plot to eliminate Jesus. This act of devotion by Mary, who is a true heroine in this narrative, is contrasted with the treachery of the villains—the religious leaders and Judas.

We must remember that the main purpose of the Gospel writers was to give an accurate record of Jesus' message, not to present an exact chronological account of his life. When Gospel writers placed events out of order, they were following (1) the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and (2) the acceptable practice for historians in the ancient world to place events out of chronological order so each could develop his particular thematic presentation. Matthew and Mark's accounts make thematic use of this event without claiming that it occurred at a certain time in the week. They may have simply placed this event here to contrast the complete devotion of Mary with the betrayal of Judas, the next event they recorded in their Gospels.

This incident represents another way in which Jesus recognized the unique perspectives, gifts, and actions of women. He previously pointed out the costly discipleship of the widow who gave all she had ([12:41-44](#)); now he presents a woman's extravagant display of love for her Lord. The home where they were staying and dining on this occasion belonged to Simon, but Martha was probably the hostess at the meals. The woman here may well have been Mary, Martha and Lazarus's sister.

[14:3](#) While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper.<sup>NIV</sup> Bethany was located on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives (Jerusalem is on the western side). This town was the home of Jesus' friends Lazarus, Mary, and Martha (who were also present at this dinner, [John 11:2](#)). Jesus had been returning to Bethany from Jerusalem each night during this final week, probably staying with his dear friends ([11:11](#)).

One night, a dinner had been prepared and Jesus was an honored guest (thus his position of *reclining at the table*). The host, *Simon the Leper*, did not have leprosy at this time, for lepers had to live separately from people because of the extreme contagiousness of the disease. Jesus may have healed Simon of his leprosy, but this name (or nickname) had stuck.

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### **LIFE APPLICATION**

#### **WHAT'S IN A NAME?**

Who knows where Simon got his name? For certain, he did not have leprosy at this point. Perhaps Mark used it to distinguish him from Simon Peter or Simon the Zealot ([3:18](#)). If he once had leprosy ("leprosy" in ancient times covered a range of diseases), he was now clean; but he couldn't shake the past.

No one would choose such a name, the ancient equivalent of Joe Psychotic or HIV George. We shun people with certain diseases, and Simon's name was like a strobe-lit sign telling everyone: Keep Your Distance.

Apparently Jesus ignored such signs, as should we. His love and acceptance gave dignity to all men and women who followed him. Our attitude should be like his, even if that means we must love the unlovely.

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A woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head.<sup>NRSV</sup> This woman was probably Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, who lived in Bethany ([John 12:1-3](#)). An *alabaster jar* was a beautiful and expensive vase with a long, slender neck carved from translucent gypsum. *Ointment of nard* was a fragrant ointment imported from the mountains of India. This was pure and genuine ointment, thus very costly. The beautiful jar was broken, and the costly ointment was poured on Jesus' head. (John records that the oil was poured on Jesus' feet—Mary probably did both, for Jesus was reclining with his legs stretched out behind the table.) It was a common custom at some Jewish meals for the honored guests to be anointed with oil (see [Luke 7:44-46](#)), but it would not be expensive nard. Such an anointing, with expensive oil and pouring it on the head as well as the feet, pictured a royal (messianic) anointing. Mary's gift to Jesus (a pint of this costly perfume, according to [John 12:3-5](#)) was worth a year's wages. Three hundred denarii (see NIV margin) was the yearly wage paid for an average worker at the rate of one denarius a day.

**See Also:**

[Chart: Major Events of Passion Week](#)

[14:4](#) But some were there who said to one another in anger, "Why was the ointment wasted in this way?"<sup>NRSV</sup> Where Mark says *some . . . said*, John specifically mentions Judas ([John 12:4-5](#)). Mark probably was referring to all the disciples. This is the first of many times in this chapter that the disciples will fail Jesus: Judas will betray Jesus ([14:10](#)); the disciples will deny that they would ever desert Jesus ([14:19, 31](#)); the disciples will fall asleep three times when they should be watching ([14:37-41](#)); all the disciples will desert Jesus ([14:48-50](#)); Peter will deny three times that he knows Jesus ([14:66-72](#)).

Judas's indignation over Mary's act of worship would not have been based on concern for the poor ([14:5](#)), but on greed. Because Judas was the treasurer of Jesus' ministry and had embezzled funds ([John 12:6](#)), he no doubt wanted the perfume sold so that the proceeds could be put into his care. This event probably pushed Judas over the edge in his determination to betray Jesus.

[14:5](#) "It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor." And they rebuked her harshly.<sup>NIV</sup> The disciples used a pious phrase to hide their true motives. They concluded that the expensive ointment had been wasted on Jesus, so they rebuked Mary for such an act because the ointment *could have been sold and the money given to the poor*. John attributes this statement to Judas; Matthew and Mark record that all the disciples were indignant over the wasting of the ointment. They certainly resented this gesture as apparent waste. Besides, Passover was the time of special giving to the poor (see [John 13:27-29](#)), and the sale of this ointment would certainly have provided a generous amount to give. The disciples felt moral outrage at the loss of resources for the poor. But Jesus knew what was in Judas's heart. Judas wasn't interested in helping the poor; he was interested in getting his hands on the money.

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### LIFE APPLICATION

#### CALCULATING GOODNESS

In one sense, the disciples were right. Lots of hungry people could be fed from the sale of that nard, now spilled and spent. An accountant bearing down on the economics of the encounter would have to consider such cost-benefit calculations.

As we must today. Should your church refurbish its sanctuary or give to a mission project? Should your daughter get a new bike or give a hungry foreign orphan a meal? Should you work harder to earn more to give more, or work less and become a deacon or missionary volunteer?

In a world of limited resources, such calculations are always with us. Yet Jesus' approval of this woman's solitary, costly, and love-inspired act breaks the calculation and frees us to be radically his, at any price.

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[14:6](#) But Jesus said, "Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me."<sup>NRSV</sup> Jesus reprimanded the disciples for their lack of insight. They had missed the intention of this rare moment of adoration by using



conventional criteria to judge it. Their words obviously criticized Mary's actions; she may have wondered if she had been wrong after all in her devotion to Jesus. But Jesus' words comforted her. The expensive ointment poured on Jesus had been *a good service* to him—a beautiful, acceptable, appealing act of love and sacrifice—and Jesus declared it to be so.

We must not discount the good intentions and good works of other believers. Some efforts of worship don't have value according to our reckoning. But a heart of worship is still valuable to Christ.

**14:7** "For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me."<sup>NRSV</sup> This was a unique act for a specific occasion—an anointing that anticipated Jesus' burial and a public declaration of faith in him as Messiah. Jesus was not saying that we should neglect the poor, nor was he justifying indifference to them. (For Jesus' teaching about the poor, see [Matthew 6:2-4](#); [Luke 6:20-21](#); [14:13, 21](#); [18:22](#).) Jesus was affirming Mary's unselfish act of worship. The essence of worshiping Christ is to regard him with utmost love, respect, and devotion, as well as to be willing to sacrifice to him what is most precious.

Jesus' purpose in these words was to explain that the opportunity to show him such devotion and to anoint him with oil (in preparation for burial) would soon be past. The phrase *you will not always have me* meant that Jesus would soon be gone from them physically. However, they could and should show kindness to the poor, and opportunities to do so would continue until the end of time. There would always be poor people who needed help. Jesus brought to mind [Deuteronomy 15:11](#): "The poor will never cease from the land" (NKJV). This statement does not justify ignoring the needs of the poor. Scripture continually calls us to care for the needy. The passage in Deuteronomy continues: "Therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land'" (NKJV). By saying this, Jesus was highlighting the special sacrifice Mary had made for him.

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### **LIFE APPLICATION**

#### **PRIORITY OF WORSHIP**

Christians have significant social responsibilities to the poor. But in all our efforts to feed hungry people or assist sick populations, we must not dismiss or ignore the priority of worship.

! A hundred bowls of rice given to refugees do not cover for a heart empty of God.

! A thousand inoculations against disease do not provide peace to a soul resisting God.

**I A multidigit check written to charity does not ransom a person who regards God as irrelevant or nonessential.**

**Worship of God precedes all acts of love and gives them meaning and purpose. Open your heart to God, and God will make your acts of charity pure joy.**

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**Jesus' words should have taught Judas and the disciples the valuable lesson that devotion to Christ is worth more than money. Unfortunately, Judas did not take heed; soon he would sell his Master's life for thirty pieces of silver.**

**[14:8](#) "She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial."<sup>NKJV</sup> Mary may not have set out to anoint Jesus for burial; she was merely showing great respect for the Teacher she so loved and respected. She probably did not understand Jesus' approaching death any more than the disciples, although she was known for truly listening to Jesus ([Luke 10:39](#)). She might have realized something was going to happen to Jesus, and thus she sympathized with him and did *what she could* by honoring him with the greatest gift she could give.**

**In this culture, fragrant ointments were used for anointing dead bodies to prepare them for burial. Jesus said that Mary had prepared his body *for burial*. Jesus would die just before the Sabbath, preventing the women who came with ointments from putting the ointments on his body before he was buried. That's why they came early Sunday morning to do so. But at that point Jesus had already been resurrected.**

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## ***LIFE APPLICATION***

### **MARY'S EXAMPLE**

**All four Gospels record Mary's example of devotion. Three important lessons remind us how we should love the Lord and not repress those who do good works:**

**1. *Let her alone.* We must not disregard or depreciate someone else's loving act of service just because it's not our style of serving. Sometimes envy, ignorance, or hardness of heart keep us from seeing the value of showing honor and praise to Christ.**

**2. *She has performed a good service.* Mary's act was courageous and sacrificial. Christ welcomed her and regarded her efforts. We must not be so practical in our stewardship of resources that we criticize the genuine and beautiful ways others express their love for Christ.**

**3. *She has done what she could.* Mary took the initiative. She did an**

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act of devotion when no one else would. She gave of her resources in a way only she could. Some people only talk about what they can do or wish they would have done, but Mary did what she felt led to do.

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**[14:9](#)** "Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her."<sup>NRSV</sup> Mary's unselfish act would be remembered forever. This has come true because we read about it today. While the disciples misunderstood Jesus' mission and constantly fought about places in the kingdom, and while the religious leaders stubbornly refused to believe in Jesus and plotted his death, this one quiet woman so loved Jesus and was so devoted to him that she considered no sacrifice too great for her beloved Master. She is an example to us all of unselfish devotion to our Savior.

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### **LIFE APPLICATION**

#### **SMALL UNFORGETTABLES**

Headlines are written about presidents and prodigies. Movies are made about world-class heroes. Yet we remember small acts of kindness and compassion. They fill our personal memories and iron out the creases of our lives. Small acts of love fuel our days.

God's memory is greater. He notices everything we do to serve and honor him. Never think of your seemingly insignificant gesture as just a blip on the screen. God is pleased with your kindness, and he will remember. God regards heartfelt devotion to him as heroic and noteworthy.

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#### **JUDAS AGREES TO BETRAY JESUS / [14:10-11](#) / [208](#)**

Each of the Gospel writers reported Judas's treachery with remarkable restraint. Their treatment of Peter's denial actually seems harsher than their references to the betrayer. Mark, the shortest account, conveys the simple facts. The enemies of Jesus were delighted. We're not told how Judas felt at this point. Since Mark was reflecting Peter's account, the reticence about Judas may indicate Peter's shame in recalling his own treatment of Jesus. We are much more likely to present a fair picture of the flaws and faults of others if we keep our own clearly in sight.

**[14:10](#)** Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them.<sup>NIV</sup> Why would *Judas Iscariot* want to betray Jesus? Very likely,

**Judas expected Jesus to start a political rebellion and overthrow Rome. As treasurer, Judas certainly assumed (as did the other disciples—see [10:35-37](#)) that he would be given an important position in Jesus' new government. But when Jesus praised Mary for pouring out the perfume, thought to be worth a year's salary, Judas finally began to realize that Jesus' kingdom was not physical or political. Judas knew the religious leaders had it in for Jesus, and he knew they would have the power to arrest Jesus. So that was where he went. Judas's greedy desire for money and status could not be fulfilled if he followed Jesus, so he betrayed him in exchange for money and favor from the religious leaders. (See [3:19](#) on the meaning of Judas's name.)**

Life Application Bible Commentary - Life Application Bible Commentary – Mark.

2. Why did the chief priests and leaders want to get rid of Jesus?

**They did not like the affect Jesus was having on the people. Jesus was challenging many of the laws and rituals they had put in place to manipulate the people. They did not want to put themselves under Jesus' authority. They saw Jesus as a direct threat to the power and positions they held with the people.**

3. Why do we often want to get rid of Jesus from our own lives, and how do we go about doing it?

**We want to get rid of Jesus when Jesus' teachings clash with what we want to do. We try to remove Jesus by avoiding having devotions, avoiding reading the bible, and avoiding coming to church. We will even stop going to people who remind us too much of Jesus' call of authority on our lives.**

4. If the woman was paying the full cost of the expensive perfume, why were to others so upset with her sacrifice?

**This woman, Mary according to the other gospels, displayed her devotion to Jesus in a very concrete and expensive way. Those who were upset knew they would not have attempted to make such a sacrifice if they had the funds available to do it. Mary's actions showed a greater depth of commitment than they were displaying. They were jealous of what Mary had done. They tried to demean her by pointing out a false concern for the poor. John's gospel indicates that it was Judas who made the statement about a concern for the poor, when in fact he was stealing money from the treasury.**

**5. How did their anger cause them to miss out on blessing in their midst?**

**The aroma of the perfume was there for all of them to freely enjoy its smell. They could have tried to capture some of the aroma to share it with others. They did not allow themselves to enjoy this very rare treat of the smell of the perfume. They also missed out on being able to see the joy on Mary's face from being able to offer such a sacrifice or the joy on Jesus' face from receiving such a rare gift. Instead of having a testimony of true love for Jesus Christ, they left with a criticism of wasting things in the face of need.**

**6. When has your anger cost you a blessing that could have been yours?**

**I have been so angry at being late for an event or having someone show up late, that it robbed me of enjoying the rest of the time of the program or of being with the person. My anger kept me from seeing, even though I didn't get all that I wanted, there was still much left to enjoy.**

**7. Why do we become envious or angry at the commitment of others to Jesus Christ?**

**Sometimes we feel guilty that we are not doing more than we are for the cause of Christ. Sometimes we are angry because we do not have the same gifts as others have. Sometimes we have the same gifts, but we keep getting different or almost no results from our efforts. Sometimes it seems as if we are even more committed than that person is, yet that person seems to be far more blessed in terms of results or lifestyle than we are. Sometimes we try**

**to credit ulterior motives for why the person is doing what he or she is doing beyond it simply being out of love for Jesus Christ.**

8. Jesus defends this woman's actions. Do you think she knew she was preparing his body for burial? Why or why not?

**Mary was doing what she was doing out of love and devotion. It took courage for her to interrupt this dinner party. This was her way of saying thanks to Jesus and to let him know just how much she appreciated him. She had no idea of knowing that Jesus would be crucified in just a day or so. We do not know when our act of love is going to be the last time we will get to display it for someone.**

9. Can we always tell when we are doing something how it fits in the greater plan of God?

**No. That which may seem insignificant to us, may be the way God is going to move to change a situation around. The greatest thing I did to bring visitors to Calvary, was to stop my busy day and listen to a young woman who was on the verge of tears because her husband had put her out. That young woman has brought more guests to Calvary than probably anyone else in the past few months. I had no idea that God would use my simple act of listening and encouraging would have such an impact.**

10. Why did Jesus see something beautiful when others only saw a waste?

**Jesus looked at Mary's heart along with the action. Jesus also was looking at the greater plan of God. Jesus did say to love your neighbor was important, but the greatest command was to first love the Lord with all your heart, your soul, your mind and your strength. The others were not thinking in terms of the greatest commandment of all. Jesus also knew that this was the only anointing his body was going to receive in preparation for the tomb. Jesus never loses sight of all the prophecies that are coming**

**into being for the crucifixion and resurrection to take place. The others did not see that Mary was offering the very best she had to God with no strings attached to her offering.**

11. Is it possible to see something for yourself, and still be wrong about what took place? Why or why not?

**Yes. We cannot see the motives as to why a person does or does not do something. Seeing an action take place is not the same thing as knowing the truth about what just took place. We always have a limited knowledge of the truth. God is the only One who sees all and knows all. When we fail to acknowledge we do not know everything, we can make some poor choices and decisions.**

12. How was Jesus' prophecy in verse 9 fulfilled?

**Our having this bible study is a fulfillment of Jesus' words in which we hold Mary in high esteem. Countless numbers of songs have blessed people as people have sung songs about the Alabaster Box and have done liturgical dances on the theme of the Alabaster box. No doubt many people have been moved to give, because of Mary's actions. She has helped the poor in ways she never will know simply by showering her love upon Jesus.**

13. Why do you think this incident was a factor in getting Judas to go and betray Jesus?  
**Judas was stealing money from the treasury. He was probably angry that Jesus seemed to be encouraging people to not put in money directly into the treasury, but to come up with alternative ways to show their love for him. He may have been upset at being rebuked publicly in front of the others and wanted to get back at Jesus.**

14. What types of incidents in our lives can lead us to go and betray Jesus?  
**Broken Relationships, loss of dreams, anger at answers to prayers in which Jesus said no, the deceitfulness of wealth, the deception of pleasure and a discontented spirit in which we feel we are entitled to more than what we have received from God.**

## Lesson 2 “ Tough Words From Jesus ” Mark 14:17-31

1. What emotions go through you when you are in the presence of someone that you know is betraying you behind the scenes? The person pretends to support you in your presence, but it's a different story when you are not around.

### Mark 14:17-31 Today's New International Version (TNIV)

<sup>17</sup> When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. <sup>18</sup> While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me.”<sup>19</sup> They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, “Surely not I?”

<sup>20</sup> “It is one of the Twelve,” he replied, “one who dips bread into the bowl with me. <sup>21</sup> The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.”

<sup>22</sup> While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take it; this is my body.”<sup>23</sup> Then he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it. <sup>24</sup> “This is my blood of the<sup>[a]</sup> covenant, which is poured out for many,” he said to them. <sup>25</sup> “Truly I tell 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.” <sup>26</sup> When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

### Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

<sup>27</sup> “You will all fall away,” Jesus told them, “for it is written: “I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.”<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>28</sup> But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.”

<sup>29</sup> Peter declared, “Even if all fall away, I will not.”<sup>30</sup> “Truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “today—yes, tonight—before the rooster crows twice<sup>[c]</sup> you yourself will disown me three times.” <sup>31</sup> But Peter insisted emphatically, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” And all the others said the same.

## COMMENTARY

**14:17** In the evening He came with the twelve.<sup>NKJV</sup> On that evening (Wednesday or Thursday), Jesus arrived in Jerusalem *with the Twelve*. Perhaps Peter and John returned to Bethany after all was prepared to tell the others that the meal was ready.



Then, just after sunset, Jesus and the Twelve went back into Jerusalem to the upper room. The meal was not to be eaten until after sunset and was supposed to be finished by midnight.

**14:18** Now as they sat and ate, Jesus said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you who eats with Me will betray Me."<sup>NKJV</sup> The disciples and Jesus took their places on the reclining couches around the table. During such an important meal as the Passover, everyone would recline at the table, symbolizing the freedom the people gained after the very first Passover and their subsequent release from slavery in Egypt. The meal was organized around drinking four cups of red wine, symbolizing the four-part promise of redemption found in [Exodus 6:6-7](#). (1) "I will bring you out"; (2) "I will rid you of bondage"; (3) "I will redeem you"; and (4) "I will take you for my people, and I will be your God."

There was a traditional program for the meal. First would come a blessing of the festival and the wine, followed by drinking the first cup of wine (this also made this meal special, for usually water was served with meals). Then the food would be brought out. The youngest son would then ask why this night was distinguished from others; the father (certainly Jesus in this instance) would answer with the story of the Exodus and would point to each item on the table as he explained its symbolic significance (for example, bitter herbs symbolized the bitter bondage of slavery in Egypt). This would be followed by praise to God for the past and future redemption (taken from the first part of the Hallel in [Psalms 113–115](#)). Then the second cup of wine would be drunk. After the second cup, the bread would be blessed, broken, and distributed, and then eaten with bitter herbs and a fruit-paste dish.

This would be followed by eating the meal, which was not to last beyond midnight. The Passover meal included roasted lamb sacrificed in the temple. At the end of the meal, the father would bless a third cup of wine, which would be followed by singing the second part of the Hallel (from [Psalms 116–118](#)). A fourth cup of wine would conclude the meal (see [14:25](#)).

Jesus and the disciples were at the point of eating the bread with the sauce of herbs and fruit ([14:18](#)) when Jesus spoke the stunning words "*One of you who eats with Me will betray Me.*" Jesus knew who would betray him. The betrayer was one of his own chosen twelve disciples, one with whom the meal was at that moment being shared. Jesus alluded to [Psalm 41:9](#), "Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me" (NIV).

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### LIFE APPLICATION

#### COLD-BLOODED

Judas, the very man who would betray Jesus, was at the table with the

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others. Judas had already determined to betray Jesus, but in cold-blooded hypocrisy he shared the fellowship of this meal. It is easy to become enraged or shocked by what Judas did; yet professing commitment to Christ and then denying him with one's life is also betraying him. It is denying Christ's love to disobey him; it is denying his truth to distrust him; it is denying his deity to reject his authority. Do your words and actions match? If not, consider a change of mind and heart that will protect you from making a terrible mistake.

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**14:19** They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, "Surely not I?"<sup>NIV</sup> Jesus' words caused quite a stir among the disciples. They had heard Jesus tell them three different times that he would soon die, but that one of them would actually betray Jesus saddened them greatly. From the accounts of Mark and John we know that the betrayer was Judas Iscariot. Although the other disciples were confused by Jesus' words, Judas knew what he meant. Apparently Judas was not the obvious betrayer. After all, he was the one the disciples trusted to keep the money ([John 12:4-6](#)). So the disciples asked Jesus who the betrayer was; "Surely not I?" each one asked in turn. The Greek form of the question would be rendered, "It is not I, is it?" and implied a negative answer. Each disciple hoped to clear himself and wondered if he would have the courage to remain faithful. Matthew records that even Judas asked this question: "Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, 'Surely not I, Rabbi?'" Jesus answered Judas, "You yourself have said it" ([Matthew 26:25](#) NIV margin). This answer was ambiguous enough so that only Judas would know that Jesus had identified him as the betrayer.

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### LIFE APPLICATION

"ME? IS IT ME?"

Eleven of the twelve men could ask this question with clean hearts—they did not intend to do wrong, but would they? Only one was hiding, deceiving, wrecking his own conscience, trading loyalty for money.

Eleven came forward. Not one assumed his own virtue. Each disciple wanted to know if the Master Surgeon could see a cancer in his soul.

Only one did not need to be told, for he already knew.

To renounce our sin, we need the loyal and responsive attitude of the eleven. And if our consciences have already declared us guilty, we need to learn from Judas the high cost of denying the truth.

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**14:20** He said to them, "It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the bowl with me."<sup>NRSV</sup> Jesus answered that the betrayer was indeed *one of the twelve*. Then he added that this betrayer was dipping his bread into the bowl with Jesus. In Jesus' time, some food was eaten from a common dish into which everyone dipped their hand. Meat or bread was dipped into a dish filled with sauce often made from fruit. Jesus' words emphasized the treachery of the betrayer. To eat with a friend and then turn around and betray him was treachery at its worst.

**14:21** "For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born."<sup>NRSV</sup> Jesus would indeed be betrayed and would indeed die as he had already told his disciples. His death would not occur merely because of the betrayer, for the *Son of Man* had to die to complete God's plan and fulfill Scripture (for example, [Psalm 41:9-13](#); [Isaiah 53:1-6](#)). All would happen *as it is written of him*.

*But* (and this small word makes all the difference) *woe to that one* who betrayed Jesus. Again Jesus' words were reminiscent of [Psalm 41](#), this time [verses 10-12](#), where the sufferer was vindicated by God and his enemies punished. Jesus felt true pity for this one who would betray him because he was acting as Satan's agent. His fate would be so awful that Jesus expressed his pity by saying that it would have been better for that person not to have been born. Jesus knew that Judas was going to betray him, and he also knew that Judas would not repent. Jesus next predicted Peter's denial. The words were not so full of doom, however, for Peter repented and was forgiven of his sin.

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### LIFE APPLICATION

#### STERN WARNING

A moment before, Jesus had warned Judas indirectly. Here he lowered the boom. Judas knew that the big "Woe!" was for him. And what a judgment! Judas would have been better off to never have been born.

Denying Jesus, refusing his claim on our lives, and scoffing at his words bear serious consequences. Soon Judas would know in his heart that Jesus was right.

Don't let your life break down so tragically. Seeing the truth, don't deny it. Hearing the truth, don't refuse it. Knowing the truth, don't betray it.

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Luke wrote that "Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot" before he went to the religious leaders ([Luke 22:3](#) NIV). However, Satan's part in the betrayal of Jesus does not remove any of the responsibility from Judas. In God's sovereign will and according to his timetable, he uses sinful men. But that doesn't excuse their sin. All people will be

held accountable for their choices and actions. Disillusioned because Jesus was talking about dying rather than about setting up his kingdom, Judas may have been trying to force Jesus' hand and make him use his power to prove that he was the Messiah. Or perhaps Judas, not understanding Jesus' mission, no longer believed that Jesus was God's chosen one. Whatever Judas thought, Satan assumed that Jesus' death would end Jesus' mission and thwart God's plan. Like Judas, Satan did not know that Jesus' death and resurrection were the most important parts of God's plan all along.

John records that upon this pronouncement, Jesus told Judas to "do quickly what you are going to do" ([John 13:27](#) NRSV). Then Judas went out into the night.

**14:22** And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."<sup>NKJV</sup> Jesus and the disciples were eating the bread, and Jesus took the loaf of unleavened bread, blessed, and broke it. The "blessing" of the bread refers to the Jewish practice of giving thanks for bread at a meal by saying, "Blessed are you, Lord, our God, who brings forth bread from the earth." Bread was considered a gift from God. It was irreverent to cut it with a knife, so it was torn (or broken) with the hands. Jesus gave the bread to the disciples to eat with the sauce. As he did so, he gave this Passover practice an entirely new meaning.

The book of Mark explains the origin of the Lord's Supper, also called Communion, table of the Lord, the breaking of the bread, or Eucharist (thanksgiving), which is still celebrated in worship services today. Jesus and his disciples ate a meal, sang psalms, read Scripture, and prayed. Then Jesus took two traditional parts of the Passover meal, the passing of bread and the drinking of wine, and gave them new meaning as representations of his body and blood. He used the bread and wine to explain the significance of what he was about to do on the cross. For more on the significance of the Last Supper, see [1 Corinthians 11:23-29](#).

Jesus told the disciples to "*Take, eat; this is My body.*" Jesus used literal terms to describe a figurative truth. Just as he had so many times said, "I am" the door, the bread, the light, the vine, so the bread symbolized Jesus' work of salvation on behalf of humanity. His words "this is my body" symbolize the spiritual nourishment believers obtain from a personal relationship with the Savior. The phrase would more clearly be translated, "This is my self." It was Jesus' pledge of his personal presence with all his disciples whenever they would partake of this meal.

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### LIFE APPLICATION

#### BY ANY OTHER NAME

Each name believers today use for this sacrament brings out a different dimension to it. It is the "Lord's Supper" because it commemorates the

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Passover meal that Jesus ate with his disciples; it is the "Eucharist" (thanksgiving) because in it we thank God for Christ's work for us; it is "Communion" because through it we commune with God and with other believers. As we eat the bread and drink the wine, we should be quietly reflective as we recall Jesus' death and his promise to come again, grateful for God's wonderful gift to us, and joyful as we meet with Christ and the body of believers.

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Christians differ in their interpretation of the meaning of the commemoration of the Lord's Supper. There are three main views: (1) The bread and wine actually become Christ's body and blood; (2) the bread and wine remain unchanged, yet Christ is spiritually present by faith in and through them; and (3) the bread and wine, which remain unchanged, are lasting memorials of Christ's sacrifice. No matter which view they favor, all Christians agree that the Lord's Supper commemorates Christ's death on the cross for our sins and points to the coming of his kingdom in glory. When we partake of it, we show our deep gratitude for Christ's work on our behalf, and our faith is strengthened.

Just as the Passover celebrated deliverance from slavery in Egypt, so the Lord's Supper celebrates deliverance from sin by Christ's death.

**14:23 Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it.**<sup>NKJV</sup> Luke mentions two cups of wine, while Matthew and Mark mention only one. In the traditional Passover meal, wine is served four times. Most likely the cup mentioned in this verse was the third cup; [verse 25](#) refers to the fourth cup that Jesus did not drink, vowing first to complete his mission before drinking again of wine. Christ spoke the words about his body and his blood when he offered the fourth and last cup. He gave thanks and gave it to them. Matthew includes the command, "Drink from it, all of you" ([Matthew 26:27](#) NIV).

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### *LIFE APPLICATION*

#### PRAYER OF THANKS

This wine cup was to picture a painful death just ahead. It would represent Jesus' blood for the rest of time. Yet Jesus treated it with the same reverent gratitude as all other cups of wine when he paused to thank God the Father for it.

Table grace is not an empty ritual, a moment to let food cool off. It's our giving thanks, however briefly, for provision and protection and heavenly mercies. Prayer brings the awareness of God's presence to the table. It reminds us of the source.

Jesus blessed the food, thanking God for it, even at his last meal before his death. So should we express thanks to God for all his provision.

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The celebrations in the Christian church (Communion, Eucharist, the Lord's Supper) have first a sharing of bread (including a repetition of Jesus' words, "This is my body"), and then a sharing of wine (including a repetition of Jesus' words, "This is my blood," [14:24](#)). Thus, the Christian celebration incorporates the initial and ending portions of this last supper of Jesus.

Jesus gave thanks for the cup of wine. The Greek word translated "had given thanks" is eucharisteo, from which we get the English term "Eucharist." It shows the joyous nature of the early celebrations of the Lord's Supper.

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### LIFE APPLICATION

#### THEY ALL DRANK

That they all drank from the cup reflects our common experience at Communion. We experience the presence of Christ; we remember his life and death for us; we acknowledge again his lordship in our life.

- Communion humbles us before God. We all come; we all eat and drink together. We confess our sin and restate our need for him to lead our lives. This ritual gets rid of our pride.
  - Communion reminds us that we are forgiven. It reaffirms for us that sins confessed are sins forgiven because of Christ's death. Communion cleanses our guilt.
  - Communion expresses our oneness in Christ. We participate as a body of believers in one communion; thus, we are unified in our faith and in our experience of Christ.
  - Communion encourages us to recommit. As we recall the sacrifice of Christ, we are reminded to pledge ourselves to service like his.
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**[14:24](#) He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many."**<sup>NRSV</sup> As with the bread, Jesus spoke words in figurative language. "*This is my blood*" means "This wine represents my blood." Jesus' blood, shed on behalf of many (that is, all the elect community), began a *covenant* between God and people. In later manuscripts, the word "new" has been inserted before "covenant." This insertion is based on [Luke 22:20](#) and [1 Corinthians 11:25](#), where the word "new" appears in all Greek manuscripts. The *many* are those who will become part of the covenant that his death created ([10:45](#)). According to [Isaiah 53:11-12](#), the Qumran usage of the term,

and rabbinic teaching, "many" is a key word that refers to the chosen people, the elect community of salvation who will inherit the kingdom of God.

The word "covenant" refers to an arrangement established by one party that cannot be altered by the other party. In other words, God established the covenant, and humans can only accept or reject it; they cannot alter it in any way. Jesus was saying these words at the drinking of the third cup at the Last Supper, the cup that stands for "I will redeem" (see the note on [14:18](#)). Jesus' words recall [Exodus 24:6-8](#), where Moses poured half of the blood of the covenant on the altar and sprinkled the people with the other half to seal the covenant. Jesus understood his death as sacrificial, inaugurating and sealing the new covenant.

What did Jesus mean by a "new covenant"? In Old Testament times, God had agreed to forgive people's sins if they would bring animals for the priests to sacrifice. When this sacrificial system was inaugurated, the agreement between God and human beings was sealed with the blood of animals ([Exodus 24:8](#)). But animal blood did not in itself remove sin (only God can forgive sin), and animal sacrifices had to be repeated day by day and year after year.

Jesus instituted a "new covenant," or agreement, between humans and God. This concept is key to all New Testament theology and forms the basis for the name of the New Testament portion of the Bible. Under this new covenant, Jesus would die in the place of sinners. Unlike the blood of animals, his blood (because he is God) would truly remove the sins of all who would put their faith in him. And Jesus' sacrifice would never have to be repeated; it would be good for all eternity ([Hebrews 9:23-28](#)). The prophets looked forward to this new covenant that would fulfill the old sacrificial agreement ([Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)), and John the Baptist called Jesus "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" ([John 1:29](#) NKJV).

The old covenant was a shadow of the new, pointing forward to the day when Jesus himself would be the final and ultimate sacrifice for sin. Rather than an unblemished lamb slain on the altar, the perfect Lamb of God was slain on the cross, a sinless sacrifice so that our sins could be forgiven once and for all. Jesus explained that his blood would be *shed* (or "poured out"), referring to a violent death. Once again Jesus was teaching his disciples that he would soon face a violent death, dying on behalf of others.

Those who accept Christ's sacrifice and believe in him receive forgiveness. Now all people can come directly to God through faith because Jesus' death has made us acceptable in God's eyes ([Romans 3:21-24](#)).

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### *LIFE APPLICATION*

#### SEALED AGREEMENT

Jesus' death for us on the cross sealed a new covenant between God

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and people. The old covenant involved forgiveness of sins through the blood of an animal sacrifice ([Exodus 24:6-8](#)). But instead of a spotless lamb on the altar, Jesus offered himself, the spotless Lamb of God, as a sacrifice that would forgive sin once and for all. Jesus was the final sacrifice for sins, and his blood sealed the new agreement between God and us. Come boldly to God through Jesus, in full confidence that God will hear you and save you from your sins.

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**[14:25](#) "Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."**<sup>NKJV</sup> Again Jesus assured his disciples of his victory over his imminent death and of a future in *the kingdom of God*. The next few hours would bring apparent defeat, but soon they would experience the power of the Holy Spirit and witness the great spread of the gospel message.

Jesus' vow to abstain from wine was made before the fourth cup, which was drunk with the words, "I will take you as my people, and I will be your God" ([Exodus 6:7](#) NRSV). Jesus reserved the drinking of this cup for the future restoration. This powerful scene is accented by Jesus' taking the third cup, saying "I will redeem you," sharing it with the disciples, and then pledging that he would finish this celebration in the kingdom of God (see also [Luke 14:15](#); [Revelation 3:20](#); [19:6-9](#)). See [Isaiah 25:6-8](#) for the Old Testament purpose of the messianic feast. [Matthew 26:29](#) adds the words of Jesus "with you," giving real assurance to his disciples and to all of us. Because Jesus would be raised, so his followers will be raised. One day we will all be together again in God's new kingdom. The *fruit of the vine* in the kingdom will be *new* in quality—joyous, complete, fully realized.

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### LIFE APPLICATION

#### INVITATION TO DINNER

What the disciples could not see, but Jesus did, was all the trouble just ahead—all the clamor, pain, and public humiliation. Here Jesus determined to see it through (no more eating until . . .); he also turned his gaze to the future and the promise.

How would Jesus endure the pain? He knew a big banquet was coming. There he would celebrate and break the fast with all his loved ones gathered around.

When you face imminent trouble and need courage, do as Jesus did. Remember the promise and look to the future. Trust Christ even in circumstances you don't understand and when they seem overwhelming. Thank God for the victory that wipes away all tears.

By the way, have you sent your R.S.V.P.? This banquet is for you,

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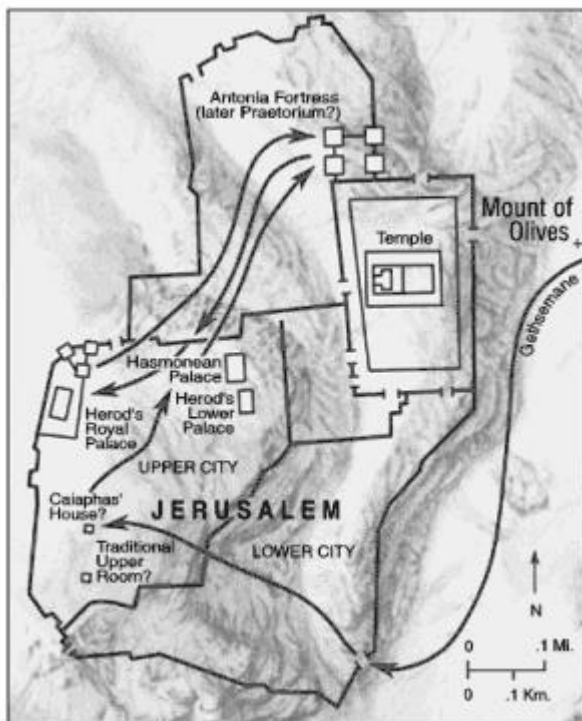
and the price has been already paid. Look forward to joining him at the heavenly feast.

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*JESUS AGAIN PREDICTS PETER'S DENIAL / [14:26-31](#) / [222](#)*

Both Luke and John reported that Jesus predicted both the disciples' abandonment and Peter's denial while they were still having supper. Mark and Matthew placed Jesus' comments in the break between the meal and their arrival in Gethsemane. Since there are no time or location indicators for Jesus' prediction in either Mark or Matthew, the event may refer to a separate incident. There are enough differences in detail to support the idea that Jesus warned Peter on two occasions that he would deny the Lord (see also [John 13:31-38](#)). For instance, Luke's and John's accounts involve Peter directly, while Mark and Matthew introduce the announcement with Jesus' statement that all of them will "fall away" ([Mark 14:27](#) NIV).

True to form, Peter reacted to Jesus' prediction. He could not imagine the disciples abandoning Jesus. Least of all himself. He said so: "Even though all become deserters, I will not" ([Mark 14:29](#) NRSV). If Jesus warned Peter twice, as well as included him in the general warning that all of them would fall away, then Peter actually received a threefold prediction of his denial. But before we criticize Peter, we should first see ourselves in him. Peter reminds us how easy it is to profess our faith and how difficult it is to remain loyal under pressure.



## **Upper Room and Gethsemane**

*Jesus and the disciples ate the traditional Passover meal in an upper room in the city and then went to the Mount of Olives into a garden called Gethsemane. In the cool of the evening, Jesus prayed for strength to face the trial and suffering ahead.*

**14:26** And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.<sup>NKJV</sup>

The hymn they sang was most likely taken from [Psalms 116–118](#), the second part of the Hallel that was traditionally sung after eating the Passover meal. John included a lengthy discourse that Jesus had with his disciples ([John 13:31–17:26](#)) before he and the eleven remaining disciples left the upper room and *went out to the Mount of Olives*, located just to the east of Jerusalem. Leaving the room did not surprise the disciples, for they had not been staying in Jerusalem at night and had left the city every evening to return to Bethany. This time, however, Jesus went only as far as the southwestern slope, to an olive grove called Gethsemane, which means "oil press."

**14:27** And Jesus said to them, "You will all become deserters; for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.'"<sup>NRSV</sup>

This was the second time in the same evening that Jesus predicted the disciples' denial and desertion, which probably explains their strong reaction ([14:31](#)). (For Jesus' earlier prediction, see [Luke 22:31-34](#) and [John 13:36-38](#).) That the disciples would become *deserters* means that they would take offense at him and turn away. Fearing what would befall Jesus, they would not want to experience the same treatment. So Jesus explained that they would desert him, deny association with him, and distance themselves from him. Jesus would go to the cross totally alone.

It's easy to think that Satan temporarily had gained the upper hand in this drama about Jesus' death. But we see later that God was in control, even in the death of his Son. Satan gained no victory—everything occurred as God had planned. Jesus himself explained that the disciples' desertion would also occur just as it had been predicted in Scripture, specifically [Zechariah 13:7](#).

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### LIFE APPLICATION

#### STRAIGHT TALK

Jesus warned the disciples that they would desert him. He spoke with devastating honesty. He didn't rationalize their mistake or ease their guilt. He confronted head-on the sorry behavior of his disciples.

There's nothing quite so helpful as straight talk from someone totally

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dedicated to your well-being and growth. Hear it from Jesus; practice it with Jesus' care. Straight talk such as Jesus gave could help untangle a lot of emotional knots in families, at work, and among friends. We can speak honestly when we say: "I know you are weak, vulnerable, and mistaken—it's not OK, and you ought to worry about it—but I love you, and I'm willing to forgive you."

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In Zechariah, God commanded that the shepherd be struck down. As a result, the sheep would be scattered. Without a shepherd and on their own, the sheep would go through a period of great trial and be refined. The refining process would strengthen them and create a new, faithful people for God. The disciples would be staggered by what would happen to Jesus, but Jesus' death ("striking the shepherd") would ultimately produce their salvation and regather the sheep. [Zechariah 13](#) ends on a note of hope, "They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are my people,' and they will say, 'The LORD is our God'" ([Zechariah 13:9](#) NIV).

**[14:28](#)** "But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee."<sup>NIV</sup> After his prediction of their desertion, Jesus then predicted their reunion after his resurrection. Jesus promised that he would go ahead of them into Galilee and meet them all there. Galilee is important in Mark's Gospel as the place of restoration. That is where their relationship would be renewed, their failures forgiven, and their pattern of ignorance and rejection broken. Indeed the angel at the tomb would reassure the women, "He has risen! He is not here. . . . But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you'" ([16:6-7](#) NIV). Jesus made resurrection appearances in Galilee ([Matthew 28:16](#); [John 21:1-23](#)) and in Jerusalem and the surrounding area ([Luke 24:13-52](#); [John 20:11-29](#); [1 Corinthians 15:5-8](#)).

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### LIFE APPLICATION

#### THE LORD'S SOLUTION

After the experience on the Mount of Transfiguration ([9:2-9](#)), Jesus told Peter, James, and John not to tell anyone of his glory until after the Resurrection. Here Jesus gives them the solution to all problems of misunderstanding and failure they had experienced all along—to be reunited with their risen Lord in Galilee. Yet Peter immediately protested, and even after the Resurrection, the angel had to remind them of Jesus' words: "But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you" ([16:7](#) NRSV). No matter how confused we may feel, no matter how many times we have failed, the solution is to be reunited with our Lord. As we trust in him, we

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are forgiven, restored, and empowered to be his disciples in our world.

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**14:29** Peter said to him, "Even though all become deserters, I will not."<sup>NRSV</sup> Peter, always ready to speak up at inopportune moments, declared that his allegiance to Jesus would prove to be much stronger than all the other disciples'. He seemed to ignore what Jesus had said in [14:28](#), but he was not rejecting the reality of Christ's suffering as he had in [8:32](#).

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### LIFE APPLICATION

#### SPEAK UP AND SPEAK OUT

In a culture so dominated by passive activity (watching television, watching athletics, watching politicians), rarely does a person speak up and declare his or her mind. Peter had the gift of speaking up.

Although Peter's ambitions did not match his performance, we should not fault his motives—he wanted to declare his loyalty to Jesus. Peter spoke up when, too often, Jesus' disciples retreated to silence. Peter's words would return to sting him, but through him the world would hear the gospel preached.

Peter would be brought pretty low before he realized how fully he must trust Jesus. But we would not have expected Peter to respond passively, "OK, Jesus, if you say we'll desert you, then sure, we'll desert you." From Peter we must learn to be bold enough to speak up but humble enough to obey Christ's teaching.

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**14:30** Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that today, even this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times."<sup>NKJV</sup> Jesus' words to Peter were solemn, begun with the formula "Assuredly, I say." Instead of being the only loyal disciple, Peter would in fact prove himself the least so. Not only would he desert Jesus, he would also deny him—not once, but three times. And this would happen in the space of the next few hours. Before the night was over, that is before the rooster crowed a second time, Peter would deny the Master to whom he claimed such loyalty. Only Mark recorded a second crowing of the rooster (see also [14:72](#)). If Peter was, in fact, Mark's source for this Gospel, he certainly remembered this minor detail.

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### LIFE APPLICATION

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## TALK IS CHEAP

Peter was so emphatic. It is easy to say we are devoted to Christ, but our claims are meaningful only when they are tested in the crucible of persecution. How strong is your faith? Is it strong enough to stand up under intense trial? We need the Holy Spirit, not boastfulness and human resolve. We must never discount our vulnerability to pride, greed, or even indifference.

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**[14:31](#) But Peter insisted emphatically, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the others said the same.**<sup>NIV</sup> Peter did not think it possible for him to actually deny any relationship with Jesus. Perhaps he was worried that *he* was the betrayer Jesus had mentioned during their meal ([14:18](#)). Not only Peter, but all the disciples declared that they would die before disowning Jesus. A few hours later, however, they all scattered.

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## LIFE APPLICATION

### "MY MOST EMBARRASSING MOMENT"

Peter remembered this moment for the rest of his life. How stupidly he had promised what he so miserably failed to do. Yet his most embarrassing moment afforded the greatest lesson of his life. He learned the gospel here, that "God so loved" even disciples who fail.

Your life includes some real blunders, too. Do you hear God's loving assurance? Do you feel God picking up the pieces? Do you sense the grace?

It's easy to imagine that Peter told many people about the gospel by using this story, his own most embarrassing moment. Perhaps you should tell others of God's patience with you. Your mistake plus God's grace equals the wonderful story of salvation.

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Life Application Bible Commentary - Life Application Bible Commentary – Mark.

2. If you had been one of the 12 disciples, what would have been your reaction to Jesus' announcement that one of them is going to betray Him?

*I would have been surprised. They seemed to have been a close group of people. The big question on my mind would have been, why would any of them have wanted to betray Jesus*

3. Why does Jesus not name who the betrayer is in verse 20 and why does he use the words of verse 20 as a hint?

*Jesus knew the events that had to take place that night. He knew that the Scriptures had to be fulfilled. If Jesus would have identified Judas as the betrayer, it is unlikely that Judas would have been able to go freely and turn Jesus over to the chief priest. The disciples would have wanted to have kept Judas from completing his mission and would have prevented his escape from the group. Jesus wanted the disciples to know that he knew who the betrayer was so that they would not think Jesus had been deceived.*

4. Why would Jesus say in verse 21 that it would have been better for the betrayer to have not been born?

*Jesus knew that Judas was going to pay a terrible price for his sin. No sooner than he was paid for the job of betraying Jesus, Judas tried to give the money back. His remorse of feeling bad was not enough. Judas goes on to commit suicide in his despair. Jesus' words show that Judas is going to be held responsible for his decision when he stand before God. He will not simply be able to say the devil made me do it.*

5. What do you think Jesus is getting at by having them eat the bread and drink the wine saying this is my body and this is my blood?

*When Jesus says this is my body, he is literally saying this is my self. Our spiritual nourishment is to come from us feasting on the life of Christ. Our source of energy is to come from us being in a personal relationship with Christ. In drinking the wine as his blood, we are acknowledging that our spiritual life comes from Jesus. We die when we lack enough blood. When the life of Jesus is not flowing through our spiritual life, we die off spiritually.*

6. Why do you think they ended the meal with a hymn before leaving?

*The Passover Meal would traditionally end with a hymn usually from Psalms 115-118. Those psalms deal with trusting in God as God delivers His people from their enemies. They also stress the goodness of God. After the devastating news the disciples got from Jesus, singing the hymns together was a way of renewing their hope and their confidence in God.*

*They do not realize it at the time, but it is sort of the last worship service they will share with Jesus before his death. Singing together is one way of producing fellowship with each other.*

7. Do you think that Jesus' prophecy that "they would all fall away that night" was beneficial to the disciples. Why or why not?

*We all wonder at times if it is better to know something bad is going to happen in advance, if there is nothing we can do to change what is going to happen. I think it was helpful in that when it happened it let them know that Jesus was still in charge of the situation. They could take hope in knowing that he still trusted them, even though he knew they would not stand by him. On the other hand, it did cause them a lot of anxiety, since he left out some details. They tried to prove him wrong, by taking our swords to fight the soldiers when they arrived to arrest Jesus. Yet they ended up confused when Jesus demanded they put away their swords and let him be taken captive.*

8. If God knew you were going to fail in a major test, would you want God to reveal it to you in advance?

*I don't think I would want to know in advance, because I don't know if I could still give my all in applying myself to the situation. If after I had done all that I could do, then God told me I would fail, I would know that at least God was still there with me. I guess too, it might depend on what kind of a test I was facing. If it was a character test, I think I would want to know that in advance. It was an achievement or accomplishment test, I would not want to know that in advance if I was still expected to go through the project.*

9. Why do you think Peter was so confident that he would not fail?

*Peter knew how much he loved Jesus. Jesus had transformed his life. He was willing to go down fighting for Jesus if that's what Jesus required of Him. The problem for Peter is that Jesus surrendered in the garden to the mob and soldiers, long before Peter was willing to stop fighting. Jesus ended Peter's heroic stance by saying "put away your sword."*

10. How can our over confidence cause us to fall away from Christ?

*We think we not only know God, but that we know God's plan. We make the mistake of thinking that God is going to act in a particular manner in a given set of circumstances in our lives. God may allow events to unfold in our lives in ways that we had not considered and certainly would not have chosen. Like Peter, we may be shocked at what God tells us to do in the midst of a battle, and end up being more confused than ever. The great plans we have for our lives for God can be removed in an instant and our confidence lay shattered on the ground. The question becomes, where do we go from here when we feel betrayed by God.*

11. The disciples heard Jesus' words in verse 27 "You will all fall away", yet none of them seemed to have caught on to verse 28 "But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee." Why does no one ask him about what it means for him to have risen?

*Sometimes we can become so focused on the trial we are to go through, that we miss hearing that there is a victory on the other side. It's easy to focus on what's going to happen to "me." We can hear good news and reject it, simply because we're not in the right place to receive it.*

12. Have we ever been like Peter and the disciples, insisting that God is wrong about our future? Why do we do it?

Probably. We do it because we have our own plans for our future. We probably have something much easier in mind than what God is laying out for us.



### Life-Sharing Lesson 3 “Hard Answers To Prayers” Mark 14:32-42

1. What was an experience you knew was coming, but you dreaded the thought of having to go through it?

*I use to dread the first two weeks of football practice when you had to get in shape physically. My whole body would seem to be aching.*

#### Mark 14:32-42 Today's New International Version (TNIV)

<sup>32</sup> They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” <sup>33</sup> He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. <sup>34</sup> “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,” he said to them. “Stay here and keep watch.”

<sup>35</sup> Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. <sup>36</sup> “Abba, <sup>[a]</sup> Father,” he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”

<sup>37</sup> Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Simon,” he said to Peter, “are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? <sup>38</sup> Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” <sup>39</sup> Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. <sup>40</sup> When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him.

<sup>41</sup> Returning the third time, he said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. <sup>42</sup> Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

#### COMMENTARY

**14:32** Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray."<sup>NKJV</sup> After eating the meal, the disciples left Jerusalem and went out to a favorite meeting place, the gardenlike enclosure called *Gethsemane* (see [John 18:1-2](#)). *Gethsemane* means "olive press"; the garden was probably an orchard of olive trees with a press for extracting oil. The garden was in the Kidron Valley just outside the eastern wall of Jerusalem and just below the Mount of Olives. Jesus told eight of the disciples to sit down, probably near the garden's entrance, while he went farther in to pray.

Plenty of drama surrounds Mark's terse account. The elders of Jerusalem were plotting to kill Jesus and had already issued a warrant for his arrest. Jesus left

Jerusalem under cover of darkness in order to pray. The disciples must also have been physically and emotionally exhausted from trying to comprehend what would transpire. Instead of watching, they gave in to their exhaustion and fell asleep.

**14:33 And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed.**<sup>NKJV</sup> Jesus then took the other three disciples, his inner circle, farther into the garden with him. To these closest friends, Jesus revealed his inner turmoil over the event he was about to face. Jesus was *troubled and deeply distressed* over his approaching death because he would have to be separated from the Father and would have to bear the sins of the world. The divine course was set, but Jesus, in his human nature, still struggled ([Hebrews 5:7-9](#)). His coming death was no surprise; he knew about it and had even told the disciples about it so they would be prepared. Jesus knew what his death would accomplish. He also knew that the means to that end would mean taking upon himself the sin of the world, thus, for a time, alienated from his Father who would be unable to look upon sin: "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#) NIV). Jesus bore our guilt by "becoming a curse for us" ([Galatians 3:13](#) NIV). As the time of this event neared, it became even more horrifying. Jesus naturally recoiled from the prospect.

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### LIFE APPLICATION

#### JESUS KNOWS

Sometimes we forget how fully human Jesus, Son of God, Savior, really was. Here we see it. His agony fills the garden.

Agonies consume us, too. To face the imminent death of a loved one or the accidental death of a child or our own approaching demise—these agonies can tear at our souls.

Do we have a Savior who knows how heavily we tremble, how deeply we groan? Yes, we do. Can we come to this Savior in prayer and find a friend? Yes, we can. Jesus is with you; he's been there; he knows the feeling. He will help you come through.

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**14:34 "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch."**<sup>NIV</sup> To these three disciples Jesus revealed his inner agony. He was shuddering in horror at the prospect before him. Early in Jesus' ministry Satan had tempted him to take the easy way out ([Matthew 4:1-11](#)); later Peter had suggested that Jesus did not have to die ([Mark 8:32-33](#)). In both cases, Jesus had dealt with the temptation soundly. Now, as his horrible death and separation from the Father loomed before him, he was *overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death*.

Jesus did not attempt to run from it, nor did he doubt that God would raise him from the dead and return him to glory. Jesus, in his humanity, agonized over the inevitable horror that would soon come, yet he faced it courageously ([Hebrews 12:2-3](#)). Some see in Jesus' words an allusion to [Psalm 42:6](#).

Jesus asked Peter, James, and John ([14:33](#)) to stay with him. James and John had professed that they could drink the cup of Jesus' suffering ([10:38-39](#)). Jesus wanted these men to *keep watch*; Jesus knew Judas would soon arrive, and Jesus wanted to devote himself to prayer until that time came. Jesus also wanted them to stay awake and participate with him in his suffering. This is a vital part of discipleship. Jesus wanted these disciples to understand his suffering and to be strengthened by his example when they would face persecution and suffering.

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### LIFE APPLICATION

#### PRAYER AND COURAGE

When the road you're on is irreversible and you're unsure about what's ahead, pray for courage to take another step forward. We all need courage to face tough reality.

When grim injustice and devilish hatred are robbing you of life's treasure, pray for the courage to trust God completely through the pain and for the eventual victory of love.

At the worst moment of his life, Jesus prayed. Now he is our advocate in heaven—and he knows the courage we need.

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**[14:35](#) And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.**<sup>NRSV</sup> Jesus went still farther into the garden to be alone with God. His agony was such that he threw himself on the ground before God in deep spiritual anguish, praying that if possible *the hour might pass from him*—that his mission might be accomplished some other way. Here and in [14:41](#), "the hour" figuratively refers to the entire event Jesus was facing. The "hour" and the "cup" were used synonymously. Yet Jesus humbly submitted to the Father's will. Luke tells us that Jesus' sweat resembled drops of blood. His prayer was filled with extreme emotion. Jesus was in terrible agony, but he did not give up or give in. He went ahead with the mission for which he had come.

**[14:36](#) And He said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will."**<sup>NKJV</sup> Abba was Aramaic for "father" and implied familiarity and closeness. Only Jesus could have used the word Abba in a prayer to God, because Jesus had a special Father/Son relationship with him. Jesus' using it showed his surrender to and faith in the Father's

will. Children addressed their fathers as "Abba," but the term was far too familiar for adult Jews to use in speaking to God. Paul used the term in [Romans 8:15](#) and [Galatians 4:6](#), showing that the early church picked up the term from this prayer of Jesus.

The words *all things are possible for You* indicate God's omnipotence. He could accomplish anything. Jesus was affirming God's sovereign control over the coming suffering (see [10:27](#)).

With the words *take this cup away from Me*, Jesus was referring to the suffering, isolation from God, and death he would have to endure in order to atone for the sins of the world. Jesus, as God's Son, recoiled from sin, yet part of his task would be to take the sins of the whole world upon himself. This was a cup he truly hated to drink. In addition, Jesus, as God's Son, knew constant fellowship with the Father. Yet for a time on the cross he would have to be deprived of that fellowship. This too was a cup he hated to drink. The physical suffering would be horrible enough, but what God's Son feared most was the cup of spiritual suffering—taking on sin and being separated from God ([Hebrews 5:7-9](#)).

Yet Jesus was not trying to get out of his mission. Jesus expressed his true feelings as a human being, but he did not deny or rebel against God's will. (Some scholars think Jesus was referring to [Isaiah 51:22](#), where God lifted the cup of judgment for the righteous in Jerusalem.) Jesus' human will was distinct from God's will, but it did not oppose God's will. He reaffirmed his desire to do what God wanted by saying, *"Nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will."* His prayer reveals to us his terrible suffering. Jesus paid for all sin by being separated from God. The sinless Son of God took our sins upon himself to save us from suffering and separation.

God did not take away the "cup," for the cup (to judge the sins of the world) was his will. Yet he did take away Jesus' extreme fear and agitation. Jesus moved serenely through the next several hours, at peace with God, knowing that he was doing God's will.

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## LIFE APPLICATION

### COSTLY COMMITMENT

In times of suffering people sometimes wish they knew the future, or they wish they could understand the reason for their anguish. Jesus knew what lay ahead of him, and he knew the reason. Even so, his struggle was intense—more wrenching than any struggle we will ever have to face. What does it take to be able to say "as God wills"? It takes firm trust in God's plans; it takes prayer and obedience each step of the way. Trust God that his way is best, even when it doesn't seem like it.

**14:37** Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour?"<sup>NIV</sup> Jesus got up from his prayer to return to the three disciples. He had told them to stay and keep watch ([14:34](#)), but instead of showing support for Jesus by remaining awake with him and praying themselves for strength in the coming hours, they had fallen asleep, "exhausted from sorrow" ([Luke 22:45](#) NIV). Also, the hour was very late, perhaps after midnight.

Jesus spoke to Peter, calling him *Simon*, his name before he had met Jesus. Apparently Peter's recent boasting ([14:31](#)), present sleepiness, and coming denial rendered him less than "Peter, the rock" (see [John 1:42](#)). Peter had said he would never leave Jesus; yet when Jesus needed prayer and support, Peter wasn't even there for him. He had fallen asleep. Thus, Jesus rebuked him for his failure to keep watch for even one hour. Only Mark mentions the Lord's words to Peter. Perhaps Peter wanted Mark to tell this part of the story.

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### LIFE APPLICATION

#### WAKE UP!

Peter wasn't the only sleeper. James and John were sleeping, too. Should Peter feel singled out for blame? Yes, he was. Peter was supposed to be the leader of his group. He professed his loyalty, and he knew that leadership required extra responsibility. Peter should have kept the others awake, along with himself.

Yet aren't we like Peter? How difficult is it for us to pray for one hour when we're worried and exhausted, when our energy and motivation are at low levels?

We must be leaders who are watchful, who remain prepared for the Lord's work. We must learn leadership skills from teachers who see our potential and work hard to build our character. When Jesus singles you out for a special responsibility, he wants you to grow into a leader. Stay awake; step up; follow Christ.

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**14:38** "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."<sup>NKJV</sup> Jesus told the disciples that this was the time to *watch and pray*, for soon difficult temptations would come. Jesus was not asking that they pray for him; rather, that they pray for themselves. Jesus knew that these men would need extra strength to face the temptations ahead—temptations to run away or to deny their relationship with him. For this they needed the three-pronged strategy of vigilance, prayer, and resisting temptation. Jesus warned the disciples about vigilance throughout [chapters 13](#) and [14](#). "Enter into" could also be translated "fall into." Jesus

wanted them to pray that their faith would not collapse. The word "temptation" can mean testing or trial. Jesus wanted his disciples to pray for strength to go through the coming ordeal. The disciples were about to see Jesus die. Would they still think he was the Messiah? The disciples' strongest temptation would undoubtedly be to think they had been deceived.

Many have interpreted "spirit" to mean "human spirit" because "spirit" is not capitalized. Thus it would mean that while their *spirit* might be willing, their *flesh* would be weak. Their inner desires and intentions would be, as they had previously boasted, to never deny Jesus and to die with him. Their relationships with Jesus had made them eager enough to serve him in any way possible. Yet their human inadequacies, with all their fears and failures, would have difficulty carrying out those good intentions. A willing spirit (see [Psalm 51:12](#)) needs the Holy Spirit to empower it and help it do God's will.

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### LIFE APPLICATION

#### RESISTERS

We may not face execution for our faith, but we face many problems that wear us down. We deal with irritating people whom we must love and serve; we face the burden of unfinished tasks or lack of obvious results; we cope with helpers who let us down or fail to comprehend. We must remember that in times of great stress, we are vulnerable to temptation, even if we have a willing spirit. Jesus told us how to resist:

| *Keep watch* ([14:34](#))—we must stay awake and be morally vigilant.

| *Pray to God* ([14:35](#))—this is how we maintain our vigilance.

| *Seek support of friends and loved ones* ([14:33](#), [37](#), [40-41](#))—this is how we build up our resistance and help one another; when one is weak, others are strong.

| *Focus on the purpose God has given us* ([14:36](#))—this is how we do God's will and not our own.

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**[14:39](#) And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words.**<sup>NRSV</sup> Jesus went away from the three disciples and went back to his previous conversation with the Father ([14:35-36](#)).

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### LIFE APPLICATION

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## NO PRAYER, NO SHARE

Perhaps disgusted, at least disappointed, Jesus left the slumbering disciples who could not stay awake. This pictures what happens when Christians and their churches fail to pray.

Where no one prays, Jesus, as it were, walks away. The church without prayer functions as little more than a vacant structure. The person without prayer is going it alone, in a stupor, in a slumber, not really alive.

To have a share of the Savior's life and power, we must do what links our hearts to his: pray.

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**[14:40](#) And when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him.**<sup>NKJV</sup> Jesus came back once again to the three disciples, and once again they were asleep. Despite his warning that they should be awake, alert, and praying not to fall into the coming temptations, *their eyes were heavy*, and all three went back to sleep. Apparently Jesus again awakened them, and in their embarrassment *they did not know what to answer Him*. The three of them had reacted the same way at Jesus' transfiguration. During Jesus' time of prayer beforehand, they also had fallen asleep ([Luke 9:32](#)) and had been unable to express themselves appropriately to Jesus ([Mark 9:6](#)). At that time they had been filled with fear; here in the garden, they were filled with grief.

**[14:41](#) He came a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."**<sup>NRSV</sup> Jesus went away to pray a third time, only to come back and find the disciples still asleep. Jesus, after much time in prayer, was ready to face his *hour*. The disciples had missed great opportunity to talk to the Father, and there would be no more time to do so, for Jesus' hour had come. Thus Jesus did not again tell them to pray. Jesus had spent the last few hours dealing with the Father, wrestling with him, and humbly submitting to him. Now he was prepared to face his betrayer and the sinners who were coming to arrest him.

This began the fulfillment of [14:27](#), "You will all become deserters," and characterized the isolation that Jesus had to face during his last hours. From here on, Jesus had to go it alone. *The Son of Man is betrayed* ties into the three predictions of his death (see [8:31](#); [9:31](#); [10:33-34](#)).

"Sinners" was the term used for Jews who did not live according to God's will and for Gentiles, who were viewed collectively as sinners because they didn't live by God's law. Jesus probably used the term to refer to the priestly authorities who were being disobedient in their actions against Jesus, and to the Romans who were participating in the arrest, mockery, and death of Jesus.

**[14:42](#) "Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"**<sup>NIV</sup> Jesus roused the three sleeping disciples (and perhaps the other eight as well) and called them together. His

words "Let us go!" did not mean that Jesus was contemplating running. Instead, he was calling the disciples to go with him to meet the traitor disciple, Judas, and the coming crowd. Jesus went forth of his own will, advancing to meet his accusers rather than waiting for them to come to him. Jesus' *betrayed*, Judas, had arrived. Judas knew where to find Jesus and the disciples because Gethsemane had been a favorite meeting spot ([John 18:1-2](#)). It was to this quiet garden in the very early hours of the morning that Judas brought a crowd to arrest Jesus.

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### LIFE APPLICATION

#### *SEMPER PARATUS*

"Always Prepared." The motto of the U.S. Coast Guard rings true about spiritual life, and this scene illustrates the difference between prayer and preparation on the one hand and no prayer and disoriented bewilderment on the other. As Jesus moved forward to meet his adversaries, the disciples, alarmed into wakefulness, disintegrated before the posse.

Do you want that *semper paratus* attitude? Pray, live close to Jesus your Savior, and there find the courage to meet your life standing up, awake and alert.

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Life Application Bible Commentary - Life Application Bible Commentary – Mark.

2. What can we learn from Jesus in verses 32-34 about relying on others in our times of grief?

**Jesus recognized that he needed the help, the prayers and the encouragement of others. Jesus did not mind asking for assistance. Jesus also did not share his soul with everybody equally. He had one level of intimacy with the 12 disciples as compared to the 72. He had another level of intimacy with the 3 as compared to the other 9. He shared more of his heart and agony to the 3 than he did the others.**

3. How does Jesus Prayer in verse 35- 36 seem to confirm Jesus' statement that He is The Way, The Truth & The Life, no one comes to the Father except through Him?



**Jesus knew the amount of pain and suffering that was awaiting him over the next 36 hours. There was the physical pain of the crucifixion. The spiritual pain of bearing our sins. The emotional pain of being separated from the Father. This was not something Jesus wanted to endure, unless the Father considered it absolutely necessary for our salvation. God is love by nature. God would not have allowed Jesus to endure all that was done, if there were many other ways for us to be saved that had nothing to do with Jesus suffering on the cross.**

4. Why and when must we pray as Jesus did, “not what I will, but what you will” ?

**All of our prayers, should have at their foundation, for God’s will to be done. We may be certain that we know what is best for a given situation. The reality is that our knowledge is limited. We do not know how the answer to a given prayer is ultimately going to turn out. Even when we see an immediate positive benefit, there are yet further consequences. When God told Hezekiah he would die, Hezekiah begged for more time. God gave him 15 years, but during that time Manassah was born and succeeded Hezekiah as king. Manassah was one of the most wicked of the kings of Judah. He also ruled for 55 years. Our desire should be for God’s will to be done in each of our situations even when it hurts. Jesus paid a price in praying not what I will, but what you will?**

5. Why do you think the disciples had a hard time staying awake to pray?

**The disciples were probably exhausted physically and emotionally. It was very late at night. They had walked to the city of Jerusalem earlier that evening. Jesus had given them the shocking news of betrayal and desertion. They were probably just overwhelmed by it all.**

6. Why would Jesus pray the same prayer a second time after returning from the disciples?

**The reality of the situation is still facing Jesus, and it is wearing heavily upon his mind. Prayer is talking to God about what's on your heart. Jesus wants to continue to conversation with God. It is not a sign of unbelief to bring a matter up with God again and even again.**

7. We often talk about Jesus as the Son of God. In what ways does this passage reveal Jesus' human side as the Son of Man?

**We see Jesus in great agony and turmoil. He's not simply speaking the word and the seas become calm. He recognizes the storm is coming and he has to go through it. Jesus has voluntarily laid down his power and authority to face situations in the same way that we are called to face them. He is in emotional turmoil with his sweat becoming like blood. He is looking for others to pray for him as though his own prayers are not sufficient. He is experiencing disappointment. We see a certain nervousness on Jesus' part that has not been demonstrated before.**

8. Sometimes prayer is presented as a formula. If we do this, then God must do that. What are we guaranteed when we pray earnestly?

**We are simply guaranteed that God will hear our prayers. God is not obligated to respond with a specific answer to our prayers.**

9. What answer did Jesus get to his prayer?

**Jesus' answer was "no, you must go through this and endure it. Here is the strength to make it possible."**

10. What does it appear Jesus received from praying?

**Jesus appears to have received a new confidence and boldness in carrying out his mission. He certainly comes back the third time with a take charge kind of an attitude. There is no more praying to escape the situation. He is moving forward knowing that ultimately He is going to win.**

11. How do we know when we have prayed long enough about a particular situation?

**Jesus prayed three times over his situation. Paul prayed three times over his thorn in the flesh. We don't know how long or how many times Moses prayed to enter the promised land before God told him to stop asking. Anna and Simeon prayed for years before they saw the birth of Jesus at the temple. Sometimes we pray until we see an answer. Sometimes we pray until God says pray no more. Sometimes we pray and we pass that prayer on to others to keep our prayers alive after we have died.**