

**Mark 14:22-52**  
**October 10, 2010**  
**Lynchburg, Virginia**

**EXHORDIUM**

We have now come to the Last Supper, the last time that the disciples share intimate and peaceful fellowship. But even here, there is discord, as Judas is at the height of his treachery.

Jesus has been teaching the disciples about Himself, about the nature of the Kingdom, about their role in that Kingdom. They still do not get it. On this night, they reveal by their words and actions that they still do not fully understand who Jesus is, what He is doing, or what their role will be.

**EXEGESIS**

**22 And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body.**

As always, keep in mind the context. This meal was inaugurated on the same night that Israel was delivered from Egypt.

On that night, the first born of all men and livestock were killed. But those who were redeemed by the blood of the Passover Lamb were all saved. God had made a mockery of the gods of Egypt, toppling them all and in the process, He devastated their land and kingdom. At that time, many died because they did not believe the God of the Jews either could or would do such a thing. They certainly had reason to believe as their land had undergone nine disastrous plagues already. But all those in Egypt had a choice to make. Would they serve the gods of the Egyptians or the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? Most chose to serve the god of the Egyptians and lost their sons as a result.

But God's people and many among the Egyptians as well, chose to serve Yahweh. Thus, the death angel noted the blood and passed them by.

In this meal, the disciples understood all of this. They knew that the shed blood of the Lamb was a testimony to God that they believed in His promise of deliverance and salvation. The Passover Lamb saves. But they still did not understand that Jesus is Himself the Passover Lamb. And now, the bread that is broken and the wine that is drunk, is the body and blood of

Christ. He has taken the place of the Passover Lamb to redeem not only first born sons, but all who call upon the name of the Lord for salvation. The Passover Lamb was killed every year as a reminder that sins must be expiated but the blood of bulls and goats and even lambs is not enough to take away sins. But Jesus, the perfect lamb, does take away sins. They are nailed with him to the cross and men are set free from the penalty of sin.

**23 And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. 24 And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.**

The inauguration of this meal was the beginning of the Old Covenant. It was not until Moses that there was the administration of the Old Covenant system.

Incidentally, we should get the covenants clear. There have only been two major covenants in the history of man. The first was a Covenant of Life, Commonly called the Covenant of Works. That was the covenant made with Adam and Eve. If they obeyed God, then He promised life to them and to their posterity. If they disobeyed God, then they would die.

The only other major covenant is the Covenant of Grace. That covenant began after Adam and Eve fell and continues to this day. In the Covenant of Life, man had access to God by God's grace but without the impeding element of sin. In the Covenant of Grace, man approaches God through God's grace and God deals with man's sin through forgiveness.

It has always been the case that man is saved by grace through faith. It was true with Adam before the Fall and after. It was true with Abraham 400 years before the Law. And it was true in Moses when the Old Covenant administration began.

What we call the New Covenant era is not the beginning of the covenant of grace. It is the change of the administration of that covenant. Instead of operating in a sacrificial system that prefigures Christ, we are the recipients of a fulfilled and better covenant that is based on better promises.

To be sure, the Old Covenant made promises to all that would believe in Yahweh, both Jew and Gentile. But the revelation of that covenant and God's purposes to save the world were not as clear as they now are in Jesus Christ. It is true that the promises were there, even in the Old Covenant but

Israel stumbled and fell because of unbelief. Thus, a veil remained over their faces. In the New Covenant, all of God's promises become clear in Jesus Christ. The promise to all who believe and to all who are far off and to their children. There is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female. God is not a respecter of persons. It is the job of the church to disciple the nations. The promises which were applied in a small and nationalistic way become gloriously global. It is true that the promises always were global. But God's people were blinded and could not see them. It is in the breaking of Jesus Christ, that men begin to see.

**25 Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.**

When Jesus drinks the wine on the cross, we should understand that the Kingdom of God has come upon us.

**26 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.**

It is amazing that the disciples still do not have a clue what Jesus is going to do or what is going to happen. They do not suspect Judas as a traitor. They do not know that Jesus is going to die. They are not sure if the time for the kingdom is at hand but it would appear that Jesus is declaring the kingdom to be near. But here they sing a hymn and go out to the garden. Seems like a beautiful ending to a wonderful Passover meal.

**27 And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. 28 But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee. 29 But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.**

Jesus starts to make His intentions more clear. Peter understands and states that he is ready to fight and even to die. This seems like a bold statement on Peter's part, even though we know that he fails to live up to his aims. But his failure is more than a willingness to die with Jesus. He also failed to believe that Jesus was who He said He was. At this point, Peter is hoping that the great insurrection would start and that their actions might set

the whole thing off. So, Peter is saying that he is willing to die and be the flame that sets the world ablaze. This does in fact happen as Peter and the other Apostles are martyred. But this night Peter loses his courage and stops believing that Jesus could accomplish the task of bringing in the Kingdom of God.

It is clear that Peter loved Jesus and was intensely loyal to Him. He seems to be saying that even if everything fails, I am going to stand by you, no matter what.

**30 And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.**

Jesus knew Peter better than Peter knew himself. It is likely true that Peter knew that he was impetuous, made rash and bold statements, and then sometimes had to live with the consequences. But people who do such things exhibit faith at the time they do them. They may lack discretion and wisdom but they do not lack zeal. By now, Peter should know Jesus. He should understand that Jesus often does the opposite of what is expected and yet things somehow work out. Peter has great faith in Jesus but stumbles at just the point when he is called upon to show if we implicitly and completely trusts Jesus. Yes, Peter you may trust Jesus with your life but do you trust Him with your death? He can take you great places but do you believe that He can raise you from the dead?

Men who believe that God is Sovereign over all things including when they die, are very dangerous men. You all know the famous quote from Stonewall Jackson, that famous Calvinist, who said, “Until my time comes to die, I am as safe on the battlefield as I am in my own bed.” If a man has come to terms with the fact that God has numbered his days, then he becomes very dangerous. I would add that a man who believes that God will raise him from the dead is a man of the same sentiment. We desire to live well for God and we trust Him to make that possible. But we also believe that God will not leave us to rot in the Earth. What we do here will be vindicated there. We ought to believe that God will use according to the way we use ourselves up for Him. A short and glorious life is to be preferred over a long and useless one.

Peter came to the end of himself and realized that he did not fully believe what he thought he believed. He had believed that Jesus was the Christ. The Christ was the one to come and save Israel. But now Jesus is in Jerusalem, He keeps talking of death, and they don't have an army yet. His faith is wavering.

**31 But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.**

Thou protestest overmuch. Are you with me? I said I am. No, are you really with me. I'm with you to death.

**32 And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. 33 And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; 34 And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch. 35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. 36 And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.**

Jesus's friends fail Him at His greatest hour of need. They do not even recognize His need. Jesus was perhaps sore amazed at what anguish the human flesh can endure.

Even after He tells His disciples that He feels like He is dying, they fall asleep. The spirit is willing but the flesh is, indeed, weak.

If it were possible, take this cup. But it is not possible? Why not? Because God has decreed that it be so. He governs all His creatures and all their actions. It was His will.

**37 And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour? 38 Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.**

Peter, would you die with me? Would you stand with me and fight and not lose heart, believing all that I have said? How can you? You cannot

even stay awake for one hour. One does not get the sense of bitterness or even disappointment in Jesus in these exchanges. It is as if He is considering the frame of His disciples. They are well-intentioned but wholly incapable of fulfilling that which they desire.

Peter and the disciples fail to watch and pray. Because of this, they fall into temptation. What temptation? The temptation to deny Christ and fall away.

**39 And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words.**

**40 And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer him. 41 And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.**

No doubt, when they woke up they felt guilty. They did not know what to answer Jesus. But they also did not know that the time had arrived. Oh, go ahead and sleep, there is nothing you can do to prevent what is going to happen this night.

**42 Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand. 43 And immediately, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. 44 And he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, and lead him away safely. 45 And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, master; and kissed him. 46 And they laid their hands on him, and took him.**

The kiss was a holy greeting among brethren. Judas uses the kiss of fellowship as the kiss of death. We sometimes find sympathy in our hearts for Judas. He was a misguided young man who was enticed by money. But the Bible goes out of its way to make sure we know that the acts of Judas are to be despised. The other disciples fled from Jesus at His hour of need, not willing to die with Him. But Judas was the one who inflicted the wounds on Christ.

**47 And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. 48 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and with staves to take me? 49 I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not: but the scriptures must be fulfilled.**

Peter takes out his sword and cuts off Malchus's ear. He must assume the time has now come to fight and he is willing to do so. So, Peter's brash words were not without some action. He could have been killed at that very moment. However, Jesus has control of the situation. He commands Peter to put away his sword and He then heals Malchus's ear.

Here is another Scripture where man is held accountable in the face of clear predetermination. In Scripture, this is simply a plain fact. God plans things and they must come to pass. In this case, the fact that Jesus should be taken and betrayed by a friend. This lends to the monstrosity of the entire affair. However, the fact that this is predetermined in no way takes away from the free moral agency of those committing these barbaric acts.

**50 And they all forsook him, and fled.**

The troops finally bolt. This is a very sad scripture. It is understandable. I think all of you might feel the pressure of the disciples in a similar situation. Are we going to stand fast? Do you take our last stand here? Right now? Or, do we live for another day? Maybe Jesus is like John the Baptist, just the forerunner of the Messiah and we can look for another?

## **EXHORTATION**

**51 And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him: 52 And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.**

Legend has it that this certain young man is John Mark, the writer of this gospel. What happens to him is a sign of how the disciples are being stripped of all their good intentions and self-promotion.

Jesus has constantly been teaching them that His kingdom is inaugurated on and operated by different rules than the other earthly kingdoms. God had always been teaching His people this lesson. But they

wanted a king like the nations around them. The apostles seem to fall into this same way of thinking. But Jesus will have none of it.

Now, they are on their final day together and Jesus is still teaching and the disciples, with Peter as their spokesman are still not getting it. In their humiliation of abandoning Jesus they are finally exposed. They become naked before the Lord and men. All their personal aspirations and desires come crashing to the ground. And they flee from the Lord, like naked John Mark. Naked, ashamed, alone.

But the point of all of this is not that they would stay there, naked, ashamed, alone. There is more humiliation in the following chapters as we must work our way through the crucifixion. But we look to the resurrection and restoration.

But today we should look at what is necessary to seek Christ, what is necessary to be clothed in Christ, what is necessary to be saved by Jesus Christ.

Have you come to him desperate, like the young man? Where is my savior? I am willing to do your will, now. But is it too late? Did you have too much of yourself for too long? Will that window of opportunity to give yourself to Christ close in on you?

Are you stripped of your views of yourself? Of your own airs? Of your own importance to Jesus? Of your ability to serve Him by your own strength? Of your boasts to do His will constantly no matter what?

We ought to desire to serve the Lord constantly. We ought make promises to Him because He makes promises to us. But we need to understand that all that we do, both in coming into God's Kingdom and in staying and working in God's Kingdom is done by the grace of God. Everything that you have and everything that you do in God's Kingdom is because God has been kind to you and He has lavished His Holy Spirit on you. There is no autonomy in God's Kingdom. God's people serve Him by the power of His Holy Spirit. This will become expressly clear to the disciples in just a few short weeks. But let us take care to note this now. We must not rely upon our own strength, our own name, our own abilities. We are servants of our master Lord Jesus and all that we do, we do in His name and by the power of His Holy Spirit. If we keep this mind, then we maintain

our humility before the Lord and we remain clothed in our Lord Jesus, not exposed to the world, the flesh and the devil.